THE

Independent Whig.

Nec ullum satis validum Poperium Jerat coercendis Seditionibus Popula Magitia Hominum ut Ceremonias Deûm protegentis.

Chy & Therehard in T. fort



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LOWER HOUSE

prefent (and I with I could by denied, though but faintly, by any confiderable

CONVOCATION.



OU, Gentlemen, who are the Representatives of the Clergy of England, are proper Patrons of a Work, which treats

them thewn to my Brethren,

of Religion and the Clergy. It is written to promote Liberty, Virtue and A 2 Piety;

iv DEDICATION.

Piety; the Interests of which, I hope, you will always espouse, and esteem as your own; and will consequently approve my Design, and give me your Thanks, whatever may have been the Success of my Endeavours.

The many wild and unscriptural Claims started, and impetuously maintain'd by very many of those you represent (and I wish I could say denied, though but faintly, by any considerable Number of others) gave Occasion to the following Sheets; and, having in them shewn to my Brethren, the Laity, the Absurdity and Impiety of those Claims, by Arguments fetch'd from Reason, the Gospel, and the Laws of our Country; I shall, in this Address to your felves, endeavour to convince you, that it is your Interest to drop them; and if I can succeed in this Point, I prefume, all other Arguments may be useless. Thefe

These Gentlemen, in the Heat of their Demands and Contention for Power, have gone so far towards Rome, and borrowed fo many of her Principles, that I see no other Medium left for them, but either to proceed on in their Journey thither, (which, as they have manag'd Matters, is now a very fhort one) or to turn back to the Principles of the Reformation (a very long Journey, I confess!) and accept of the Bishop of Bangor's Scheme, as much as they hate it and him. That Scheme, tho' it may not be altogether so toothforne, yet is a fafe Scheme; And tho' it does not entitle them to all the Power and Wealth in England, yet it fecures to them what they have so do grimnol the Legislature; and confequently, that

Confider, Gentlemen, that you cannot take as much of Popery as you please, and leave the rest. Machiavel has long fince told us, that no Govern-DIBIE

ment

The first Principles of our Protestant Church, are the Principles of the Reformation; namely, the spiritual Supremacy of the Grown; the Right of the Laity to judge for themselves; the forming of all Ecclesiastical Polity by the Legislature; and consequently, that of creating Clergymen by the Civil Power, forgot by too many of the Clergy, and remembred against their Wills by the Laity. Whoever would main.

maintain the Reformation, must maintain these Principles; or embrace Popery, if he deserts them. Whether the solemn Oaths of the Clergy in general, have been sufficient Pledges and Motives for their believing and desending them, I appeal to their Behaviour and their Writings.

Being the sworn Servants of the Law, many of them have avowedly contradicted and bid Defiance to the Law: Being entrusted with serving and instructing the People, they have deceived and set up for commanding the People: Being chosen by the Crown to ministerial Offices, they have claimed a Power above the Crown; from which they acknowledge, upon Oath, to have received all Power. They have done what in them lay, to make the Mercy of God of none Effect, by damning whom they pleased; and to disarm his A 4 Justice,

VIII DEDICATION.

Justice, by pardoning whom they would. They have made Heaven it self to wait for the Sentence from the Priest's Mouth, and God himself to follow the Judgment of the Priest. They have pretended to oblige God Almighty to open and shut Heaven's Gates. They have afferted, that the Priesthood is a Princely Power, greater and more venerable than that of the Emperor: That the spiritual Government (that is, a Government by Priests) is farther above the Civil Power, than Heaven is above the Earth: That a Bishop is to be honour'd as God: That ' the Revenue of Priests ought to be greater than the Revenue of Kings: That greater Punishment is due to an Offence against a Priest, than to an Offence against a King: That Kings and Queens are to bow down before the Priest, with their Face towards the Earth, and to lick up the Dust of his Feet: That it is the · Royal Tuffice,

Royal Office of Kings and Queens, to carry the Priest in their Bosom, or on their Shoulders: That great Men ought not to say my Chaplain, in any other Sense than we say, My King, for My Gop.

They have decreed, that to maintain As to the King's Nomination of Bifhops, and the Power he has over the Convocation, they have maintain'd that the Church should as reasonably have the Nomination and depoling of Kings; and that it is as reasonable that the Parliament should neither meet nor fact without the Bishop's License and Authority: That the Chief Magistrate is bound to fubmit to the Bishop, who may excommunicate him: That it is a Contradiction and an Impossibility, for any State to have Authority over the Church, that is, over the Priefts: That the Priefts Power extends to the fettling of Fasting, and Feasting, and Clothes: 6 That * 11010

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'That those Clergy, who comply with the Government, and yet retain their old Principles, are the best Part, and ' most numerous of the Clergy;' that is, that those of the Clergy, who are perjur'd, are the best and most numerous. They have decreed, that to maintain that the Sovereignty of England is in the Three Estates of England, namely, in Kings, Lords, and Commons, is a damnable Principle. They have afferted, that the Lords and Commons have no more Share in the making of Laws, than a Beggar bas in one's Alms: That all Subjects are Slaves as to Life and Property: And that Refistance is not lawful for the Maintenance of the Liberties of our felves and others; nor for the Defence of Religion; nor for the Preservation of Church and State; nor for the Salvation of a Soul; no, nor for the Redemption of the whole World, of Haltings and Featings and Clothes:

There is a choice Catalogue of these extravagant Doctrines, collected in a a Pamphlet publish'd some Years since, and entitl'd, A new Catechism, with Dr. Hickes's 39 Articles; and all of them taken out of the Writings of Men in the highest Reputation amongst you. Yes, Gentlemen, all these impious, mad and felfish Doctrines have been maintain'd by those of your Order, and never yet contradicted by any publick Act of your Body. On the contrary, with your ufual Charity and good Nature, you have fallen upon those who expos'd them; tho' they were evidently the very Corner-Stones of Popery, and a flat Contradiction to the whole Spirit and Progress of the Reformation, Sturch, and direct Slavery upon your

There is no Medium between Popery and the Reformation; that is, between the claiming of any Power in Religion, and the renouncing of all Power

xii DEDICATION.

Power in Religion: (as you will find fully made out in the following Sheets)
The latter is the Characteristick of a Protestant Minister, and the former the black Mark of a Popish Priest; and you have it in your Choice, Gentlemen, which you will chuse to resemble.

felish Doctrines have been maintain'd

If you do not think fit to accept the Bishop of Bangor's Protestant Scheme, which is the same with that of the Reformation, and has been ever since the Law of the Land, there is but one Choice lest you, namely, that of working about a Popish Revolution, per sas to nesses; and of bringing undisguis'd Popery and the Inquisition into the Church, and direct Slavery upon your Country; and upon your selves, the Necessity of throwing your selves blindly upon the Mercy of the Court of Rome, for her Protection, and Licence

DEDICATION.

to preserve your Dignities and Revenues.

You have no Possibility of keeping clear of the Pope and the Regale both. The King will not part with his Prerogative; the Parliament will not give up its Authority; nor will the People entirely part with their Senses. And for the Bishop of Rome, you would do well to remember what tender Ufage your Predecessors received at his Hands. He indeed always discountenanc'd and oppress'd them. The lazy Monks, and debauch'd Fryars, were his Darlings, and peculiar Care. They were thoroughly detach'd from the Interests of the Laity, and thorough Dependents upon the Holy Father: They were therefore diftinguish'd as his Spiritual Janizaries, and the Guards of the Papacy; and to them he gave away the Revenues and Maintenance of the Secular

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xiv DEDICATION.

Secular Clergy, not so much trusted by him.

If you remember this, you will easily judge how much more it is your Interest to submit to the easy and gentle Authority of the Prince, and to live under the Protection of the Laws of your Country, by which your Income and all your Immunities are ascertain'd and secur'd to you, than to live expos'd to the Distrusts of a foreign cruel Court, and to the Rapine of soreign and needy Priests, who will be perpetually quarter'd upon you, and drawing Money from you; and when probably it will grow a Maxim in the Roman Politicks, that you must be kept poor.

But befides, however good the Intentions may be of fuch amongst your felves, or of those you represent, to become the Subjects, or, as you may vainly

vainly imagine, the Confederates of Rome; they will, in all Likelihood, find it utterly impossible to execute their Defigns; and must, in all Appearance, venture their present Possessions upon the Success of such Defigns. And if they should happen to succeed, they may have the Glory indeed of the Wickedness; but the Rewards will be, for the most Part, reap'd by new Comers, who had no Share in the Toil. Foreign Ecclefiafticks will be the first in Favour, and the highest in Place: They will carry off your Honours and your Preferments: The Sincerity of your Conversion will be question'd, or pretended to be question'd: There will quickly grow a Distinction between Old Papists and New Converts; as in Spain and Portugal, where a wide Difference is made between old Christians and new; which Difference holds for many Generations; and, in short, all Countenance

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WI DEDICATION.

tenance will be shewn, all Favours will be granted, to those who never bow'd their Heads to Baal. Your Behaviour to the late King James will also be remember'd, tho you have forgot his to you; and you will be call'd Ingrates, New Hypocrites, or Old Rebels.

I am in Hopes, Reverend Sirs, that, from all these Considerations, the Gentlemen of these Notions will find Reason to look back to their Original at the Reformation, and to preach up the Principles upon which it stands, since they are like to stand or fall by these Principles. Let them veer about once more; they know how to do it; and I will be the first to declare that they have been once in the Right, and once reconcil'd their Views to the Liberties of England.

Cenerations; and, in thort, all Coun-

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DEDICATION. XVII

I might likewise setch an Argument from their awkwardness in Politicks, to convince them that they ought to be Protestants. They have made it manifest, by many Trials and long Experience, that they are but heavy Intriguers, and fadly want both the Temper and Talents of Politicians. The Protestant Religion being a plain one, supported by obvious Truth and common Sense, and requiring no Managements or Fineness to make it go down with the People; would fit them well enough, if they could be content with it. But it is quite otherwise with the Religion of Rome; which being a surprizing Medly of various and contradictory Parts, requires the utmost Address, Delicacy and Skill to keep them from falling to pieces: And, in this Respect, the Church of Rome owes its Figure and Preservation to the Court of Rome, where all the nicest Secrets of Power

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xviii DEDICATION.

Power are underflood, and all the most curious Arts in Politicks are practis'd; where every Absurdity is finely disguis'd, and every Cruelty is artfully conceal'd; where, in fine, they have the Knack of making People pleas'd with being abus'd, and to forget that they are Slaves, or never to know it.

Hitherto, Gentlemen, it has been otherwise with you: Our Pretenders have but grofsly ap'd Popery: Their Aims have been too open, and their Management too coarfe. A blunt Demand at once for all the Wealth, and Reverence, and Power of England, was fo ridiculous, that, had we not before known their unhappyState of Ignorance, we should have thought they had been in Jest when they made it. Nor has that incurable Appetite of theirs, which they cannot hide, of combating Conscience with down-right Force, and bru-Power tifh tish Violence, done them less Harm. In fhort, good Counsel they have seldom taken; their foolish Counsels they never could conceal; and, God be thank'd, their wicked Counfels they never yet have been able, thoroughly, to execute; they, are in truth, but doggerel Politicians. English Priestcraft is as coarse as the Romish Priestcraft is fine. Theirs is the Depths of Satan, and OURS his Shallows; as is excellently faid by the late Mr. Samuel Johnson. the more doth they are to part with

The Romish Clergy chose the Days of Darkness to sow their Frauds in: They vended their holy Trifles, when Ignorance had increas'd the Number of Buyers: They planted their Power in the fertile Soil of Superstition; and by keeping the People poor, wretched, ignorant, wicked, and fearful, as they every where do, they still maintain their Dominion.

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XX DEDICATION.

But our High Gentlemen, who both know and lament, that this Nation has feen more Days of Light and Liberty (which indeed are feldom feparated) fince the Revolution, than ever it faw before, have yet preposterously chosen that very Time of Light and Liberty to advance all the wildest Claims of Popery, and all the vileft Tenets of Slavery. What could they mean? Did they not know, that the more Men find the Use of their Understanding, the more loth they are to part with it? And that those Men who are willing to part with their Understandings, must have very shallow ones?

The English Laity have been us'd pretty much of late, to think for themselves; and we find, as doubtless, Gentlemen, you do, that the more Menknow of Church Power, the less they like it. They see that Priestly Pompalways

reacce had indicated a the Missiller of

DEDICATION.

always stands on Lay Misery; that where the Priests are Princes, the People are the lowest Slaves; and that Church Power always rifes with the Fall of Liberty and Knowledge. Hear of Chims and Abanderes, which

The Popish Priests too, as they propagated their lying Tenets in the dark, fo they did it flily, and by well weigh'd Gradations. Every Invention of theirs had its proper Season. The Fire of Purgatory was kindled at one time; Indulgences were hatch'd at another. Tranfubstantiation stole in at a convenient Hour; and all their Doctrines of Gain and Power, were broach'd at politick Distances, and as Opportunities invited. By hwo and me solul

But our High Priests, as they have observ'd neither Measure nor Mercy in their Demands upon us; so neither have they made them at due and discreet Penple.

that you moved be in yours. Indee

XXII DEDICATION.

discreet Intervals. By over-loading the Cart, they have overturn'd it. They have frighten'd us with the broad and black Cloud of their Pretentions, and made Men unanimously oppose that Heap of Claims and Absurdities, which, had they been wise, we might have been brought to swallow singly. They wanted Patience, as well as Policy.

We were not yet ripe for Popery. We had Judgment enough to see that all those Claims, all those new Doctrines, evidently and solely tended to the Clergy's Advantage, and our Undoing: And we thought it was as consistent with natural Equity and common Sense, that we should be Judges in our own Case, as that you should be in yours. Indeed, if any amongst you had maintain'd Doctrines evidently grievous to your selves, and manifestly tending to the Knowledge and external Happiness of the People,

DEDICATION. XXIII

People, we should at least have thought you in Earnest. If, for Example, you had contended, that the Priefts should fast Three Days in the Week, and the Laity only when they pleas'd; that the Priefts should be entirely at the Mercy of the People for a Maintenance; and shou'd be restrain'd from taking above Thirty or Forty Pounds a Year Sallary; and forbid all Pomp and Affluence, because they vitiate the Mind, and breed Pride and Laziness, two Faults heinous in a Minister of God: I say, if you had contended for fuch Liberty in the Laity, and for fuch rigorous Restraints upon your felves, it wou'd have carried in it the Face of Sincerity and Self-Denial. But, for Priefts, who are known to have been, at first, the Alms-men of the People, (and who mostly are still educated by the Charity, and maintain'd by the Benevolence of the Laity) to talk of Palaces, Revenues, nay Thrones

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XXIV DEDICATION.

and Principalities, and be for affuming Empire over their Masters, and growing great by the Poverty of the People, is such a stretch of Arrogance and Folly, as cannot be aggravated, as it would not be credible, did we not see it. The Pretensions of the great Turk are not half so detestable.

Who would not rather be a Slave to a Monarch, than a Monk? The Oppression of Temporal Tyrants never has been, and never can be fo great as the Oppression of Priests. Temporal Tyrants only make their Slaves as miferable as Laymen can do. They take almost their All; but the little that is left, they leave them to use as they pleafe: Whereas the Prieft, where he has Power enough, exercises his Tyranny over the Bellies and Palates of his more miserable Vassals, and suffers them to eat (if he leaves them any Thing hns

DEDICATION. XXV

Thing to eat) but what he pleases, and when he pleases.

In Truth, the Subjects of Priests, Abroad, are in a viler State than the Priests Black Cattle: They are worse sed, and not more knowing.

Can you deny, Gentlemen, that the more Power the Priest possess, just so much the more Men suffer in their Souls and Bodies? Nor can it be otherwise; Power produces Pride and Debauchery in the Clergy, and Vassallage begets Baseness and Poverty in the People. Whatever is gain'd to the Clergy, is gain'd from the Laity; so that for them to be rich, we must be Beggars; and that they may be Lords, we must be Slaves. This I take to be self-evident.

Maistry

xxvi DEDICATION.

Will you, or can you fay, Gentlemen, that those Claims are conducing to the Welfare of Mankind; which, where-ever they prevail, do effectually divest Mankind of every Thing that sweetens human Life; and renders it defireable, or indeed supportable? Is that Power for our Benefit, which difarms us of our Faculties, cows our Minds with flavish Fears, and gives us up a Prey to those Men, whose Strength ties in our Weakness, and whose Profperity is owing to our Undoing? This is what it has always done, and what it does at this Day in Spain, Italy, and other Priest-ridden Countries: And this is what it would as effectually do in England, if Englishmen would suf-Beegges; and that they may be Lives we mud be Slaves. A

These Claims of yours, Gentlemen, have done you great Prejudice. They have made Men asraid of your Spirit, which

DEDICATION. XXVII

which feems to them to be merciless and insatiable. So that, if you are begrudg'd what you have, you may thank your selves; it is owing to your claiming what you ought not to have. If a Clergyman enjoys the Tythes of Part of my Estate, by Virtue of the Law; and not content with that, would have Tythes of the Whole, in Spite of the Law; it is natural enough for me to think that the Man is a Knave, who would have no Man's Property secur'd by the Law but his own.

Nothing is more common with you than to call the Impropriations of the Abbey-Lands, by the dreadful Name of Sacrilege. You fay, and some of you have said it in Print, and many more in the Pulpit, that such Impropriation was robbing the Church. What Church, Gentlemen? Was it not the Church of Rome? And are you of that

XXVIII DEDICATION.

Church? It is certain, that the reform'd Protestant Church of England never posfess'd any of these Lands. And how you, who are Protestants, and not Succeffors to the Monks, can hold from the Popish Monks, by divine Right, Lands and Immunities, which these gluttonous and cheating Vermin acquir'd by diabolical Rogueries; is fuch a Riddle as can only come from Ecclefiafticks, but can never be folved by Laymen. Did you ever hear, Gentlemen, that the primitive Preachers of Christ, set up for being Heirs to the Riches and Revenues of the Heathen Temples, when they were deserted or demolish'd? And, in my Opinion, these Pagan Revenues were more honeftly got, as well as more innocently us'd, than the Lands and Income of the Popish Mona-Aries. Abund and puddor six notistic Christin, Centermen's Measterner, the

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DEDICATION. XXIX

Our Gentlemen of this Cast have long provok'd one Part of the World, and deceiv'd the other, by their Cant of Divine Right; which, tho' a very Jeft in it felf, and long fince exploded, is a Title they clap to all their Poffessions, let them come by them how they will. This is shameful Boldness. It is certain the Gospel has not given you one Foot of Land, or one Shilling of Money; nor did ever God Almighty appear personally to do it by Word of Mouth. Your Church is a Creature of the Constitution, and you are the Creatures of the Law: And you most evidently belie Divine Right, if you pretend to derive from thence, what all the World fees you owe to fecular Bounty; I will not fay to devout Frauds. be thought a induction of

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they promote the knowlf l'encloses. If you could be but perswaded to reconcile your Principles and Pretenfiexpect

ons to the Security and Happiness of Mankind, all Mankind wou'd be reconcil'd to you and your Pretenfions. I do not remember to have ever heard the Clergy contomn'd, where they did not first deserve Contempt, When any of them depart from the Meekness of Minifters, no Body will pay them the Regard due to Ministers; such who intermeddle in every Thing, will be respected in nothing. Such who oppose every publick Good, and every Action favourable to Liberty, and beneficent to the World, will be deem'd Foes to Liberty, and to the World. Such who promote Strife, and Persecution, will be reckon'd Enemies to Peace and Charity; and those who are at the Head of all publick Mischiefs, will themselves be thought a publick Mischief. If they promote the known Principles, and endervour to support the known and main Pillars of Popery, can they SHO expect

DEDICATION XXXI

expect to be treated as Protestants? If they promote Rebellion, and practice Perjury, can they either be accounted good Subjects or Christians? And if they are the Patrons of Tyranny, and the Promoters of Immorality, what Quarter can they expect to find in a Free Country, or amongst Men of Virtue?

Layman to his ghoftly Guides? The Answer is ready— The Work was necessary; and, Gentlemen, those of your Order made it necessary: The Interest of Truth and Liberty was concern'd; and, indeed, at Stake; by the constant Attacks of those of your Robe upon them: which Attacks were so far from being disavowed by you, that the wicked Authors of them were not only treated as the Chief Champions of the Church's Cause; but

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XXXII DEDICATION.

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but all who oppos'd them have been fallen upon with the sternest Outrage, and the utmost Bitterness of Spirit; together with lying Calumnies, uncharitable Suggestions, and base and brutish Language; their usual Weapons, Offensive and Defensive.

It is worth while to mention the great Want of Sincerity in the Conduct of such Men on this Occasion. Whenever they think it feafonable, in Conversation, to uphold the mad Principles of Hickes, and of the other Protestant Papists and Nonjurors, (tho', if ever there was fuch a Thing as Blasphemy in the World, it is to be met with in their Writings, in the most daring Colours) they never fail to fhew themselves their Advocates. But when they think that a Defence of these Reveries will do a Prejudice to the Cause, with those of your and . People,

DEDICATION. XXXIII

People, who have a Notion of Religion and the Reformation; or among Men, who, they know, can expose these Reveries: Then, Gentlemen, they either shamelessly deny that these Writers maintain what they do maintain; or say, that the Clergy are not answerable for the Whimsies of particular Doctors.

Lappeal to convinon Senfe, and to the

These dishonest shifts, these base Practices, compounded of Knavery and Lies, are common amongst too many of your Order. Yes, Gentlemen, to the Disgrace of common Candour, and the Reproach of Religion, they are very common amongst the High Clergy. I my self have frequently found them; and, I believe, every one, who has had any Conversation with them, has as frequently found them.

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XXXIV DEDICATION.

Now, that these Principles (several of which I have already laid together in this Dedication) are affected in the Books of your Non-swearing and Forfwearing Brethren, I appeal to the Books themselves: That they are impious, false, Antichristian, and Destructive of Human Society, of all Social Virtues, and all Social Happiness, I appeal to common Sense, and to the known State of those miserable Countries where they prevail: And, that they have been either adopted, or approv'd by all the High Clergy, I appeal to their many Quotations from them, and to their constantly opposing every Proceeding against them. igh Clergy, Jamy felf have

Gentlemen, it is of much Confequence to you, to clear your selves from the Imputation of maintaining or adhering to such ungodly, such mischievous Tenets: Tenets, which with-

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DEDICATION. XXXV

without confulting the reveal'd Will of God, appear detestable to the common Light of Reason. Tenets, which abrogate the Justice and Mercy of God, and call his very Being in Question; and Tenets, which would for ever banish all Peace and Security from amongst Men, and from the Face of the Earth. Confider, that you cannot take one Step in afferting or countenancing them, without direct Perjury. You have, upon Oath, renounced all Power, of any kind or fort what soever, but what you receive from the King and the Law: Will you, after this solemn Appeal to God, by an Oath, facred amongst Barbarians and Infidels, appeal to all the World that you are perjur'd, by maintaining, as too many do in their Writings and Sermons, that they have a Power, which they neither derive from the King nor the Law? Malla P To BE yo sham soo

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xxxvi DEDICATION.

Sure it must be a melancholly Reflection to these Gentlemen, in Point of Credit and Reputation (for I say nothing of Conscience) that, whilst they thus distinguish themselves from Low Churchmen, whose great Crime consists in not mocking God, and leaping over Conscience and Oaths; they do, at the same time, distinguish themselves from Christianity it self, which, above all other Religions, disclaims Power, and more than all other Religions, abhors Infincerity and sale Swearing.

Can you, Gentlemen, reconcile their Behaviour, fince the Revolution, to the Understanding of the People, or to any Man's Conscience but their lown? If the Doctrine of Hereditary Right is true, as many of them eternally and fiercely contend, how could they swear to Princes made by Act of Parliament? And if the Doctrine of Passive Obedience is

DEDICATION. XXXVII

true, how came they to swear to a Government founded upon open and evident Resistance, and to be instrumental themselves in that Resistance? Their particular Behaviour to His present Majesty, cannot yet be forgot. Be so good to let us know, what Security He sound from their Oaths; or what Assistance the High Clergy gave Him against the late Rebellion, in pursuance of these Oaths? Can Men, who shew, by glaring Actions, that they value not their own Souls, do any Good to the Souls of other Men?

If you would clear your felves from the Imputation of Supporting or favouring such monstrous Principles, you must do it openly and avowedly, in full and express Words, free from that Equivocation which some of your Order are much suspected of, upon the most solution and facred Occations. You have been

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XXXVIII DEDICATION.

been ready enough to cenfure many good Books, and many worthy Propofitions: Be ingenuous for this once, Gentlemen; expose the Blasphemies of those of your own Body, and brand the Authors of them with those Names of Infamy which they deserve, and which you never want whenever you think fit to call Names. And if you fairly renounce ill Company, you will not be censur'd, as you have been, for not censuring their Impieties. The Convocation at Oxford, in the Days of Tyranny, were fufficiently forward and explicite in damning, by their deteffable Decree, fince worthily burnt by the proper Hand of the common Hangman, by Order of the Legislature; I fay, that black Assembly were forward and clear enough in damning all those Principles of Liberty, which ever have been and ever will be the Principles of Wife Men and Free Men. Confult your own Repubeen

DEDICATION XXXIX

Reputation and the Welfare of Mankind, by treading Antipodes to that wicked Assembly.

I cannot pass over in Silence, that shameful want of Charity found amongst too many of you, and every Day complain'd of to no purpose. Allowing Charity to be a Christian Grace (and the Apostle calls it the highest) I would be glad to know in what Instance you practife that Grace your felves, or promote it in others. As to such who deny the regular Means of Salvation to all Communions, except their own and that of Rome, they bring this Charge home to their own Door; fince their Courtefy to those of the same Spirit with themselves, and their good Opin nion of them, is not Charity, but Selflove and Faction. Highwaymen, no doubt, call one another honest Fellows, as frequently and habitually as other Men b 4

Men do; whereas their Honesty is only a wicked Fidelity to a Nest and Confederacy of Rogues, and they are only honest to their Fellow-Thieves: But true Honesty is the same to all Men, and to all Men alike.

tog many of you, and every Day com-

The like may be faid of Charity; it is tried and exercised upon those who are of a Persuasion different from ours. But to flatter and be complaifant to those of the same Imaginations, or the fame Craft with our felves, merely because they are of the same Craft, is such a new-fangled Charity, as would beat the old Christian Charity of St. Paul quite out of the World: And yet that this is the true Cause and the true State of modern Orthodox Charity, appears abundantly from hence, that the most wicked good Churchman has more Complement paid him, and more Favour shewn him, than the most righteous

ous, most godly Dissenter. Nay, by the servile Court paid by many, very many, to those of their Patrons, who lived Libertines, and died Atheists; and by their barbarous Usage of peaceable, religious, Dissenters, (blameable only for being Dissenters) it would seem as if Virtue were no longer the Object of their Affection, nor Vice of their Aversion.

fel of Billion Hall to Laure who was

For God's fake, Gentlemen, abandon this damning Spirit, which is a Contradiction to Religion, and a Reproach to Humanity; assume Charity for all Men, or drop all Pretensions to Christianity; learn to be temperate and well-bred, or cease claiming to be Gentlemen: Leave reviling, as you would be thought Preachers and Exhorters; and, as you would be thought Successors to the Apostles, concern not your selves with worldly Power, of which the Apostles had None.

xlii DEDICATION.

You would not fure be thought a Sett of Ecclefiafticks, detach'd both from Christians and Heathens; and yet, by contending not only for worldly Power, but for independent worldly Power, superior to all the Powers of the World, you shew, as many of you as do fo, that you are a Discredit to Christians, and yet are worse than Heathens. It was the good Counfel of Bishop Hall to Land, who was confounding all Things Human and Divine, that he would be either Fish or Flesh; either throw away his Wings, or pull out bis Claws. For God's fake, Gentlemen, tell us what Religion you are of? I mean fuch of you as affert the Positions above quoted. To what Class of Religions, think you, these Men belong? To None, certainly, that ever was in the World. They cannot even make confistent Papists, tho' That feems to be their highest Amno F

DEDICATION. xliii

Ambition. Their Popery, I own, is true Popery, and yet it is Popery without a Pope. I cannot speak so favourably of the Christianity they pretend to; tho' That too is Christianity without Chrift, who was all Meekness, Humility, and Love; who was Omnipotent, but disclaim'd all Power; who was Infallible, and yet would Judge no Man -- Are you, Gentlemen, his Successors? Do your Champions resemble this Picture? They are poor, frail, erring, mortal Men, and yet wou'd act as if they were omnipotent, and dictate as if they were infallible, Good God! Gentlemen, what Madness to deal thus with us before they had burnt our Bibles, or put out our Eyes, daidy drill moon rowell and confident with the Ways of Howen?

Do we not see Clergymen actuated by as savage and unreasonable Passions as any Sett of Men living? And would you

aliv DEDICATION.

you pretend to govern absolutely those who have at least as much Virtue, Sense and Sobriety, as your selves; who, as 'tis plain from your Lives, cannot govern yourselves better than others? Have we not feen their Heads as deep in wicked Counsel, and their Hands as deep in Crimes, as the Heads and Hands of any Society of Men upon Earth? And can you expect that we will trust the most important Care in the World, the Care of our Souls, to Men who take no Care of their own; or rather do not feem to think they have any? What Opinion, think you, can we have of their Power with Heaven, when we behold them incessantly contending for, and pursuing Power upon Earth, which is inconfistent with the Ways of Heaven? It is Time, high Time, Gentlemen, to give over, and to remember that we neither want Eyes nor Memory. There

DEDICATION. XIV

There has been a long and almost general Charge lagainst the Clergy of all Ages and Countries, for neglectiing to preach and enforce as much and as clearly as they ought, the great Doctrines of Morality, the best Mark of Religion, and the best Stay of Human Society: It is indeed Religion it felf; and that Religion which does not produce Morality, deferves another Name. Morality is the only Religion which Human Society, confidered as fuch, has any Occasion to see practis'd. If a Man is really Moral, neither the Civil Magistrate, hor his Fellow Citizens, ought to have any Concern what he believes, for how the believes. Our Actions are in our Power, but our Thoughts are not, no more than our Dreams: Belief necessarily follows Evidence; and where the Evidence does not appear sufficient, a Man cannot believe if he would: There was Virtue in the World

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xlvi DEDICATION.

World before there was Orthodoxy in it; which hard, equivocal, prieftly Word, has done more Mischief to Mankind, than all the Tyrants that ever plagued the Earth. This is worthy the Consideration of the Laity. Yes, Gentlemen, Orthodoxy has made many Tyrants, and exceeded All. What can be said to this Fact?

and that Religious which does not pro-. I allow, that Priefts often contend for good Works; but, without a Paradox, the good Works they contend for, are, for the most Part, not only not Morality, but, on the contrary, are often very wicked and finful. The Endowing of Churches and Monasteries is, for Example, with them a great good Work; and yet it has generally prov'd a mischievous Liberality, which evidently hurt Religion and Human Society, and frequently destroyed Both. I call upon you, Gentlemen, to shew where and when the bloow Chri-

DEDICATION. XIVII

Christian Religion ever thriv'd or gain'd by Riches? I, on my Side, can flew that they have been always Poyfon to it. Riches first made Priests Rampant, and fuch Priefts foon defaced and ruin'd Religion; but still more or less effectually, as their Revenues and Power were greater or fmaller. Christianity flourished most when it had neither worldly Priefts nor worldly Endowments. Will you deny this? In short, their preaching good Works has been generally preaching themfelves, who were the chief Gainers by them. And as to those good Works which did not promise any Advantage to the Clergy, they either always oppos'd them, or never encourag'd them. We cannot forget your Behaviour at the Beginning of our present Charity-Schools, how you every where oppofed them, till you had got the Management of them into your own Hands;

Alvin DEDICATION.

Hands; and now you as violently promote them out of other Mens Pockets. Whether your Government of those Schools promotes the Welfare of the Common-wealth, (if you can bear that Word) appears abundantly from the bitter and disaffected Spirit found in them.

and Power worle greater or firaller. By Morality, therefore, is meant a Thing quite different from fuch good Works. Morality is Natural Religion, which prompts us to do Good to all Men, and to all Men alike, without Regard to their Speculations, no more than to their Cloaths, or to the Colour of their Hair, which is as much in their Power as their Faith is. Morality is a focial Virtue, or rather the Mother of all focial Virtues: It wishes and promotes unlimited and universal Happiness to the whole World : It regards not a Christian more than a few or an Indian, any further than as he is

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The DEDICATION, XIX

a better Citizen; and not so much, if he is not.

accorded in this, that the Religion they

Barbeyrac, in his excellent Preface to his Translation of Puffendorf de Jure Natura & Gentium, has shewn us, by a fine Detail of Passages, how the Pagan, the Fewish, and too many Christian Priests, have all ever agreed in concealing, difguifing, mangling, calumniating, and opposing the eternal Principles of Morality or Natural Religim. The Religion of these holy Hirelings confifted either in a long Rout of Ceremonies, as tedious as ridiculous; or in certain abstruse Points, which could never be known, and were not worth knowing; and always in great Pomp and Pride; and in Dominion, where they could get it. It was either a Religion of the Body, or a Religion of the Imagination, or a Religion of Shew, Profit and Terror. In fine, the bleffed Clubs of ow Thatled upon from

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I The DEDICATION.

of Ecclefiafticks of all Religions, in whatever else they differ'd, yet always accorded in this, that the Religion they contriv'd, agreed neither with Heaven nor Earth, neither with Reason nor good Humour, but only fitted themselves and their own Views.

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Mr. Barbeyrac, in his Preface, has given us a diverting Specimen of the Absurdities and Ravings of those Reverend old Gentlemen, whom we call the Fathers. And in all the Instances he brings, it is hard, if not impossible to say, whether the Uncharitableness, Roguery, or Stupidity of these old Saints, appears uppermost.

This Preface is every way to excellent, that I have prevail'd upon a Friend of mine, a Gentleman of Gray's-Im, to translate it into English, for the Instruction of the Laity. A Reverend Divine or Two Two have translated the Book it self; but no Divine has yet thought fit to give us the Preface. My Countrymen may therefore soon expect it from him, with an Introduction.

Burgels, call'd, The Gruftsmen, has done Gentlemen, I have but two Queffions to ask of you, and I have done. Pray to what is it owing, that the usual Spirit and Zeal of this Nation against Popery, are now quite extinct; infomuch, that in the Neighbourhood of great Popish Families, your Flocks grow daily thinner, and the Mass-houfes ftronger; as I am able to shew in fome Inftances? And, Secondly, what is become of the Bundle of Papers sent by Mr. Leslie to a former Convocation, and containing a Project for a Union between the Protestant Church of England and the Popish Church of France? And I defire you will acquaint the World with the Reasons, why no Notice or Censure was passed upon them.

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li The DEDICATION.

I shall say nothing here of the usual way taken to answer Antagonists, not by Reason or Scripture, but by down-right Force, Hardships and Oppression. The late posthumous Sermon of Daniel Burgess, call'd, The Craftsmen, has done this to my Hand; and therefore I haste to conclude.

Fay to what is to wire, that the utial Sanit and, GENTLEMEN, Land I and

Your most Humble and

most Obedient Servant,

fes fironger; as I am able to thew in fome infrances? And, Secondly, what

is become of the Bundle of Papers fent by Mr. Leflis to a former Convocation, and containing a Project for a Union be-

The Independent Whig.

defire you will acquaint the World with the Reafons, why no Notice or Centure, was passed upon them.



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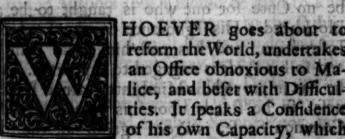
Independent Whig.

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Justum & tenacem propositi virum Non civium ardor prava jubentium, Non vultus instantis tyranni Al a I Mente quatit solidâ. HORAT. Lib. 3. Od.

Wednesday, January 20. 1720.

The INTRODUCTION.



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HOEVER goes about to reform the World, undertakes an Office obnoxious to Malice, and befer with Difficulries. It speaks a Confidence of his own Capacity, which

prompts him to fet up for the School-mafter

of Mankind; and it infers a Charge of Corruption or Ignorance in his Pupils, out of which he assumes to whip them. As every Man has a good Conceit of his own Merit, he thinks himself undervalued by Instruction, and is provoked by Correction. The Confession of our own Weakness, and that of another's better Sense, is generally both contained in the taking of Advice, which is seldom taken for that Reason.

Besides, Blindness and Prejudice are seldom to be resigned but with Pain; and therefore, for the most Part, are not resigned at all. It is but an unacceptable Civility to offer to let in the Rays of Understanding upon those Minds, which are used to subsist in the Dark. It is like opening Day-Light upon a Nest of Owls; it always sets them a Screetch-

ing:

However, the Difference is considerable between natural and acquired Ignorance, and the last is much more incurable than the first. The one is capable, and often willing, to be informed; whereas the other thinks it self above it, and is too wise to learn. There can be no Cure for one who is taught to be a Blockhead: His Ignorance is the Fruit of Instruction, and has cost him great Pains; and so his Pride is engaged to support it. As he has improved his Mind into learned Darkness, so he stands upon his Guard against Common Sense, is Proof against all the Assaults of Reason, and scorns its Power. If

he does not take you for his Enemy, and use you accordingly; yet, at least, he will pity your Mistakes, and perhaps pray for your Illumination.

It will probably be faid, by fome of my Readers, that I here describe my self and my own Performances, and perhaps with too much Truth. There lived, not long fince, a Poet, who made excellent Criticisms upon the most applauded Plays, and afterwards writ one himself obnoxious to them

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But neither these, nor any other Difficulties, or Discouragements, shall hinder me from the generous Attempt of endeavouring to reform Mankind. I have the Magnanimity to face them all, and fet about the Work; though I am sufficiently sensible of the Greatness of the Design, and have long wished that some abler Genius would have undertaken it.

I confess there have been some seeming Attempts of this Kind, which were carried on with great Dexterity and Wit, and brought great Credit and other valuable Advantages to the Authors; but I should be glad to know what Service they have done to the Publick. The exposing of small Faults can do but small Service; and People may be fingular in their Humours, and vain in their Drefs, without hurting humane Society. A Beau may wear a fine Coat, and a gaudy Sword-Knot, without prejudicing the Common-wealth, or indeed

deed any one Member of it: Nor can I see any dreadful Malignity in a hooped Petticoat. A Lady may keep a Squirrel, and diversify her Face with Fifty Patches on a Side, without invading private or publick Property. There is no Mischief in a harmless Snuff-Box, or a Diamond-Ring; nor do laced Cloaths, or a clouded Cane, prejudice Trade; nor the slirting of a Fan shake our Constitution. A terrible Fellow with a long Sword may be a peaceable Neighbour; and a Coquet may salute her Lap Dog, and yet not endanger our Liberties.

These little Sallies and Excrescencies of Humour, as they give real Pleasure and Happiness to the Proprietors themselves, so they often entertain wiser People, who might otherwise grow too severe for want of a little Laughing. And yet, I will own, that many Papers, upon that Subject, have justly merited universal Esteem and Admira-

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tion.

But the greater and more important Mischiefs, which afflict Humane Society, have been, for the most Part, lest untouch'd by our finest Writers; and Priestcrast and Tyranny have been seldom attacked by any, but rather slattered and supported. Mr. Saville is said to have replied to a Frenchman, who exulted upon the fine Writings of his Countrymen, That there were but Two Subjects in Nature worth a Wise Man's Thoughts, namely, Religion and Government, and they durst speak

speak of neither. But it is our peculiar Happiness to live in a Country, where we may fpeak our Minds freely and openly upon any, Subject, within the Bounds of good Manners and Virtue; which, I hope, I shall never

transgress.

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I own, the Free Thinker is a ufeful, as well as a fine Paper. I have feen some Discourses of his, which, in my Opinion, are inimitable; especially those upon Superstition and Enthustafm. Most that come from him are instructive, and all are elegant. I hope to worthy a Writer has fuitable Encouragement. I have not the good Fortune to know that ingenious and deferving Gentleman; but I am told that, besides his Capacity and publick Principles, and the Work he is now engaged in, he has done personal Services to the Govennment, which, in any other Country, would entitle him to a very good Station in it: If he has none in this, it is, no doubt, owing to the publick Spirit of the Great; who will, by no Fault or Courtefy of theirs, divert him from instructing his Country twice a Week. I shall only add upon this Head, that as me Man is fo well qualify'd as the Free-Thinker himself to execute his own Plan, mine will not by any Means interfere with his, as will be shewn in my next Paper. LaA AOH booms

There was one Weekly Paper, which, had it gone on, would have prevented this sal mean, the Free-Thinker Extraordinary. breathed an uncommon Spirit of publick Li-

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berry, and shewed sufficiently the Capacity of the Author to do Service to Mankind. But when he had shewed his Skill, and engaged our Attention, he dropped us and his Subject, and made it necessary, though dangerous, to succeed him. It was never asked why he undertook it; for every one saw the Reasons and Advantages of it: But why he deserted it, has been the Subject of Enquiry; and the rather, because it was evident he wanted neither Art nor Materials.

For my felf, who have no manner of Attachment to any Party, I shall not be afraid to speak my Mind of All, with that Freedom which becomes Truth and Independency; and the flattering of Power, in any Shape or Hands whatsoever, shall be the last Charge

against mes to all an approved tanding one

There is no Power in Names to confecrate Persons or Things, or to alter their Nature; and yet the Majority of Mankind have always worshipped the Idols of Words and Sounds; and a Monosyllable has often done more than an Army, towards keeping them under Awe and Servitude. In Catholick Countries, the Word Pope, or Priest, carries with it more Reverence than does the Old or New Testament, and more Terror than an armed Host. And lately in France, the Words, Grand Monarque, or the Glory of the Grand Monarque, could keep a vast Nation in Misery and Wooden-Shoes, and carry a Hundred

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Slaughter. shadobal na ed than and that reit rob This blind Devotion to Names, fo inconfiftent with true Liberty, which thews it felf in Judging as well as Acting, has also prevailed in this free Nation to a shameful and dangerous Degree. We know what terrible Lengths the Words Church, Clergy, Divine Right, and the like undefined Nonfense, have gone towards enflaving us; and what a steddy and ridiculous Reverence is still paid to them, even when they are evidently apply'd to the most impious and tyrannical Pur-

Nor does this Charge of wor shipping Words. lie altogether at the Door of one Party only. Even that Side, which boasts a greater Share of Reason and Freedom, is manifestly guilty of the like Idolatry to Names and Persons, and in Instances of the greatest Importance They do not consider the Speech, but the Speaker; nor what is done, but the Doer; and consequently praise, by the Great, in their own Leaders, what they

would loudly condemn in any others.

Credulity and implicit Belief are equally as dangerous in Government as in Religion: They have made the World Slaves, and they keep it fo. Every Party has its Pope, and fome have feveral; who, like him at Rome, never fail to make an ill Use of the Faith of their Followers, and deceive those who trust in them. both bere and horeafter.

I have said thus much to apprize the Reader, that this will be an Independent Paper, which will stoop to no Party, nor have any Friends or Enemies, but such as make themselves so, by espousing the Interests of Truth or Falshood.

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molt impious and tyrannical Par-

Wednesday, January 27. 1720.

The Design of this PAPER.

ELIGION was defigned by Hea-

Report to the Benefit of Men alone. It teaches us to moderate our Defires, calm our Passions, and be useful and beneficent to one another; and whatever does not contribute to those Ends, ought not to be called by that Name. For, Almighty God has infinite Happiness in himself, which we can neither diminish nor add to; and therefore he can require nothing of us, but for our own Sakes; nor command any Thing but what tends to our own Good, both here and hereafter.

I fay it with the utmost Sincerity, that no Man living defires to pay a more true and affectionate Esteem and Reverence than my felf to those Clergymen, who answer this End of their Institution, and whose Lives and Manners grace and adorn their Profession and Doctrine.

I thank God, I know many fuch; and perceive, with Pleafure and Transport, a noble Spirit of Liberty and true Religion rising up among them; which will foon flame out far and wide, if it is not stifled by those, whose true Interest and Honour call aloud to them

to give it Affistance and Protection.

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That Profession must be always most honourable and deferving from Mankind, which is most useful and advantageous to them. As it is therefore impossible to shew too much Respect to virtuous Clergymen, so the corrupt Part of them cannot be too much expos'd. As the Possession which they have of the Fears and Panick of Superstitious People, and in the tenderest Seasons too, enable them to do the greatest Mischief, so the strongest Antidores ought to be applied to their Poifon. It will be ridiculous to call for Protection from that Character, which they constantly difgrace, and to ask Affistance from the Religion, which they neither believe nor practife. M Dan aona 07.30003170

I here lift my felf under the Banners of the former fort; and design by this Work to illustrate the Beauty of Christianity, by expo-

fing the Deformity of Priestcrast; and to distinguish the good Clergy from the bad, by giving to each his Share of Praise or Insamy, according to the different Deeds done by them. I will lose no Opportunity of doing Justice to the former, nor willingly to the latter.

In doing this, I shall go far backward, and taking Things from the Beginning, shew in the Course of these Papers, the infinite Evils brought upon Mankind, from Age to Age, by the Pride and Imposture of corrupt Ecclesiasticks: I shall shew what a Babel they have built upon the Foundation of Christ and his Apostles, who were made to father Doctrines which they never taught; and to countenance Power which they always disclaimed. I shall shew by what Arts and Intrigues they came, from being Alms-Men of the People, to be Masters of Mankind; and how, by pretending to dispose of the Other World, they actually usurped and ruled This.

I shall shew, that notwithstanding Christianity was first propagated by Miracles and Mildness only, and the Teachers of it had no Power but to persuade; making it withal appear, in the whole Course of their Lives and Preaching, that they sought no Manner of personal Advantage, or any Manner of Jurisdiction over their Hearers and Converts; yet they who, without their Inspiration and Manners, called themselves their Successors, did by Virtue of their Names, lay insolent Claim to Dominion, and carried all Things before them, by the Dint of Terror and Excommunication.

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I shall shew that though the Clergy, like other Militia, were raised and paid for protecting Mankind from their Spiritual Enemy, yet they foon made use of the Sword put into their Hands against their Masters, and set up for themselves. I shall shew that notwithstanding the whole End of their Institution was to make Men wifer and better, yet whereever They prevailed, Debauchery and Ignorance also prevailed; and the constant Lesson they taught was blind Belief and blind Obedience, of both which they made themselves the Objects. So that Superstition was an inseparable Creature of their Power, and the perpetual Issue of it; and tainted Morals and darkened Minds were the great Props of their Dominion. A good Understanding, and an inquisitive Spirit, led directly to Herefy: and a pious Life was of ill Example, and a Reproach to the Clergy; and if any one gave Offence this Way, it was but calling him Heretick, and delivering him over to Satan, and the Man was undone, and the Clergy fafe. or bouildo onew only

I shall shew how they soon banished the meek Spirit of the Christian Religion, and growing to as great Variance with Mercy as they were with Reason, perverted Religion into Rage, and Zeal into Cruelty. They made the peaceable Doctrine of Jesus a Doctrine of Blood, and excommunicated and damned by that Name, by which alone Men could be faved. It is true, they damned Prive

one another as much as they did other People; for, agreeing in nothing but the greatPrinciple of Interest, tho they rode upon the Necks of theirPeople, yet they never could be at Peace, nor Ease, among themselves, so long as each Individual was not in the highest Place: And therefore, because every one of them could not be above all the rest, they were eternally quarrelling, and giving one another to the Devil.

If one of them held any Proposition, true or falfe, it was Reason enough for another to deny it, and eurse him into the Bargain. At last, there was not one Principle in their System but what was contested, and they agreed in nothing but their own Power; the's at the same Time, they disputed what that was. In this everlafting Scuffle and Civil War, they had fo mangled Truth, and muffled it up, that few could distinguish it from the false Images they had made of it. And yet these Men, who, by their constant Discords and Debates, confess'd themselves in endless Uncertainties, were the fure and infallible Guides to others, who were obliged to believe their Gueffes and Contradictions, on

I shall shew what a shameful Hand they have always had in bringing and keeping Mankind under Tyranny and Bondage to such Princes as would divide the Spoil with them. In such Case, it was a Point of Conscience, and a religious Duty, for Subjects to be miserable Slaves; and Damnation but to strive

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strive to be Happy. But if the Prince happen'd to be a Lover of Mankind, and endeavoured to protect his People in their Civil and Sacred Rights; then were they the constant Incendiaries of every popular and wicked Faction. They preached nothing but Sedition and Blood, till they had worked up their blind and stupid Votaries to Rebellions and Assassinations; and to such Conduct is owing a great Part of their Power and Wealth.

I think no one, who is the least convercant with Ecclesiastical History, will deny but this was the Condition of Christianity before the Reformation; and the chief Intent of this Paper is to let all the World know it, that they may be upon their Guard against the like Mitchiefs. It is certain, that the Demands of the High Clergy, upon the Laity, are as great, if not greater, than they were at that Time. As Father Paul says of England, The Horse is Bridled and Sadled, and the old Rider is just getting upon his Back.

It is Time now to conclude this Paper, by faying, if my hearty Endeavours shall any ways contribute to detect the Impostures, and expose the wicked Practices of those, who, under the prostituted Name of Sanctity, are Foes to Truth, to Liberty, and Virtue, I shall think my Time and Pains well spent. But if not, I shall have the Internal Satisfaction of having attempted at least to attack

attack Vice and Corruption, however dignified or distinguished; and the worst which can be said of me is,

Magnis tamen excidit aufis.

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Number III.

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Wednesday, February 3. 1720.

Of the Contempt of the Clergy.

ING the Bells backward! The Remple, the Temple is on Fire! The High Priests look aghast, and the People stare, and all cry out,

The Craft, the Craft is in Danger!

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This I expected, and was prepared for, when I first engaged in the Undertaking: Touch a galled Horse and he will wince, tho' 'tis in order to cure him. I knew a Gentleman, who found out a Murtherer by looking stedsastly in his Face: When any one is conscious of his own Crimes or Instrmities, he is jealous of every Approach towards a Discovery, and often makes one by it.

It

of Men is so apprehensive of Disrespect, or can so little bear the Examination into their Pretensions, as the greatest Part of the Eccle-stafficks: If you ridicule or laugh at the Professions of Law and Physick, the Lawyers and Physicians will laugh with you: The same is true of Soldiers, Merchants, and the Professor of almost all Arts and Sciences, who generally are the first to expose the

Knaves and Fools amongst them.

If a Lawyer, Soldier, or Merchant, deferves the Pillory; neither Westminster Hall, the Army, or the East-India Company, are in an Uproar; or complain that the Law, Trade, or the Soldiery, are wounded thro' his Sides; nor endeavour to raise a Mobb in his Behalf, or rebelin Token of their unlimited Submission to Government. The fair Sex do not think themselves ill used, when a Baud is ty'd to a Cart, or naughty Nymph beats Hemp: The Eleven Apostles lost no Credit when Judas hang'd himself; nor would any honest Clergyman, tho' ever so many of the other Sort did the same, or if it was done for them.

But I do not know by what Judgment or Fatality it happens, that if you but touch the Pretences or Vices of the Meanest of the Ecclesiasticks, so many of their Body are in an Uproar: They roar aloud, their Order is exposed, their Mysteries derided and profaned, and Religion it self in Danger of being sub-

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verted; and Socinian, Deift, or Atheift, is the best Word, that is often given to their best Friend; and sometimes all of them

Precentions; as the greatest Pair ofneyig era-

All other Societies of Men are contented with the Esteem and Honour, which result from the Usefulness of their Employments and Professions, and the Worth and Capacity of their Members; and yet none stand in fuch a Situation, and have fo many Advantages to acquire Respect and Homage, as the Clergy. M to malbloe wow well a H

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Their Office is evidently adapted to promore the Welfare of Humane Nature, and to propagate its Peace and Prosperity in this World, as well as its eternal Felicity in the next; fo that it is the Interest of all Men to honour it; and none but a Madman will condemn and ridicule what has a manifest Tendency to the Security and Happiness of all Mankind. to a Cart. for hour nev

The Temporal Condition of the Clergy does likewise place them far above Contempt: They have great Revenues, Dignities, Titles, and Names of Reverence, to distinguish them from the rest of the World; and it is too well known that Wealth, Power, and Learning, carry to the Vulgar a kind of Mystery, and distant Grandeur, and command not only Admiration and Reverence, but often a superstitious Veneration.

Added to this, they have the Possession and Direction of our Fears, and are admitted ge

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in Health and Sickness: Every Sunday they have the fole Opportunity to gain our Esteem by worthy and useful Instructions, and all the Week by their good Lives: They educate us whilft young, influence us in our middle Age, and govern us in our Dotage, and we neither live nor die without them.

A numerous Body of Men, fo constituted and endow'd, fo privileged and posted, are capable of being most useful and beneficent to Society, if their Actions are fuitable to their Professions. All the World will acknowledge and pay a willing Homage to their Merit, and there will be no need of demanding, much less of extorting Respect, or of Complaints and Exclamations for want of it. The Danger lies on the other Side; for there are fuch Seeds of Superstition in Humane Nature, that all our Prudence and Caution will be little enough to prevent even Adoration to their Persons. ban assistance a floured

If, therefore, they want that Respect they are fo fond of they cannot be to feek for the true Reasons, Aviz. their own Corruptions and Worthlefness, which must be exceeding great to get the better of fo many Advantages. When a certain late Dutchess was complaining to a Gentleman of more Wit than Complaifance, that (in Spite of her great Quality and Revenue) she was subject to continual Affronts; Pray, Madam, fays he,

is not Mr. Goodman an excellent Actor?

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If Clergymen would avoid Contempt, let them avoid the Causes of it. Let them not be flarting and maintaining eternal Claims to worldly Power: Let them not be hunting after Honours, courting Preferments, and bustling for Riches: Let them not be assuming to give Models of Humane Government, or to adjust and determine the Titles of Princes: Let them not pretend to punish any Man for his Way of Worship, and to give him to the Devil for his Money or Opinion: Let them not join in Factions, and foment Rebellions: Let them not defy Heaven by Iwearing falfly: Let them not promote Servitude in the People, and Barbarity in the Prince and let them not flatter wicked Kings, and plague The Danger lies on tiend boog druftib bas

Let them win Respect and wear it; but let them not earn Infamy and demand Veneration. Let not those of them, who gratify Brutish Appetites, and live in all Vileness, add Want of Shame to their Want of Grace, and bewail that they are contemned, while they are deserving it. If a Man precending to great Gravity and Regard, should dress himself up in a Fool's Coat, and a Pair of Horns, would not People laugh at him in Spite of themselves? And would not his Re-Tentment and Rebukes add still to their Mirth? A Clergyman who is Drunk on Saburday, will but, with an ill Grace, talk of his Dignity and Ambassadorship on Sunday. Ought we to own and Reverence that Man

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as our Guide to Heaven, who is himself going a contrary Road, and rioting in those Vices which his whole Duty is to restrain?

The Honour therefore of the good Clergy is consulted and promoted by exposing the bad. A profane Priest is the Disgrace and Bane of his own Order, and they who stand by him, adopt his Infamy, and defile themfelves. If he neglects God, and disturbs Humane Society, how do the Clergy suffer the he is whip'd or hang'd? His Punishment is their Credit and Security, because by it is lopped off from their Body, a gangrened Limb that incumbred and deformed the rest.

Atheists, who are not restrained by the Fear of God, which is stronger than all the Laws in the World, ought, in the Opinion of Politicians, as well as Casuists, to be expelled from the Society of Men: And shall more Mercy be shewn to those who are so hardened in Impiety, that the they believe a God, yet dread not his Vengeance, but swear by his great and terrible Name to an

avowed Falshood? Or can the Clergy suffer

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An unfortunate Levite, some Years since, had his Head cleft by a Butcher, who caught him in Bed with his Wife; and neither the Number of Reverend Auditors, who attended the Tryal, a due Regard to the Cloth, or an Apprehension of the Carnage it might produce, could hinder the Judge from directing the Jury to call the Crime only Man-

C 2 Slaughter 3

Robertfrante The Independent Whig.

Slaughter; which so provoked the meek Spirit, and Patience, of a Holy Brother, then present, that he cried out in the Court, Hey Day! Here's a fine World! if these Things are

suffered, there will be no living for us.

No chaste or fober Clergyman could be terrify'd with fuch an Example, or think the Church in any Danger by it. Does any vertuous Member of the Holy Order suffer either in his Person or Character, if Bis diverts his Spectators in a Pillory, or Parfon Paul his Auditors upon a Gallows? None can share in their Difgrace, but those who sympathize in their Crimes, or censure their Punishment. How much more honest, as well as prudent, would it be to remove the Guilt from themselves, by throwing it all upon the devoted Head; to put the evil Thing out of the City; and to imitate the Sagacity of the horned Herd, who always drive the blown Deer from amongst them, where he feeks his Refuge, tho at the Hazard of involving the whole Tribe in his Misfortune! vowed fallmood? Or can the Googy Lines



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be as easy, and intelligible at one Time as an

Wednesday, February 10. 1729.

Of the Explication of the Scripture.

O fear God, and keep his Commandments, is the Summary of the Old Testament; and to believe that Jesus Christ is come in the Flesh, is the Compendium of the New. Whoever can prove his Obedience and Faith, by these two plain Duties, fulfils the Law and the Gospel.

It was most agreeable to the infinite Goodness and tender Mercies of God, to make every Thing which he requires of us, weak Men, obvious and clear. The Importance of the Duty implies its Certainty, which is not to be found in Phrases either doubtful or obscure. The Scriptures are justly stiled the Revealed Will of God, and are address'd to all Mankind, and given to remain as a Rule of Faith and Manners to the End of the World. It must therefore follow, that whatever is necessary to be known in them, is to C 3

be as easy and intelligible at one Time as an-

other, and to all Men alike.

Where their Meaning cannot be politively determined, a new Inspiration will be necessary to reduce them to Certainty; and if that is wanting, every Thing else is but Conjecture. Whoever therefore goes about to put a Construction upon such Passages in Scripture, and enjoins us to believe his Interpretation, does not demand Submission to the Word of God, but to his own Authority and Imagination.

What Use is there of an unintelligible Proposition? Or of a Revelation which wants to be revealed? Almighty God will never require of us to see in the Dark, till he has given us new Eyes; nor to believe any Article, or obey any Precept, till we understand him, and know what he means. A Rule which is not plain, is no Rule at all: Nor will he make a Law binding, or the Transgression of it a Sin, till we know what it is.

It is true, Humane Laws oblige all Men to submit to the Penalty annexed to the Transgression, the many perhaps may never hear of them. But this is to prevent the constant Plea of Ignorance, which otherwise would be made by all Offenders. The Corruption and Imbecility of Humane Nature make this Proceedure necessary. But it is far otherwise in the Dispensation of Providence. The Author of it sees our Hearts, penetrates the most secret Recelles of our Souls, makes indulgent

dulgent Allowances for our Weaknesses, and expects nothing from us, but what he has given us the Means and Abilities of knowing and performing. He requires us not to make Brick without Straw. He judges by the Intention, not the Action. We cannot offend him but voluntarily, much less offer him an Affront, when we design Respect and Obedience.

The Creator and Preserver of Mankind cannot take Delight in puzling his Creatures with Darkness and Ambiguities, and in Points too where their Souls are in Danger. He is not a rigid Master, who would reap where he did not sow. This would be a cruel Mockery, unworthy of the Divine Being, Who has brought Life and Immortality to

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Nothing is plainer than the Law and the Gospel. Whoever says the contrary, does no less than accuse the great and good God, and justify wicked and wilful Men, whom he has lest without Excuse, by telling them clearly what he expects from them. What does God require of thee, O Man, but to do Justice, to love Mercy, and to walk Humbly? said One of his Prophets out of his Mouth. I am very sure there is no Difficulty in understanding this.

The obscure Passages in Scripture could not be intended for our Instruction. Infinite Wisdom has hid them from our Eyes, to be brought to Light in his own Time, and then

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to answer the Ends of his Providence; or perhaps to baffle our vain Pride and Curiofity. Who art thou, O Man, who wilt be wifer than the Omniscient, who wilt make those Things necessary which he has not made so, wilt discover what he has thought fit to conceal, and know his Secrets whether he will or no? This would be to mend the Scripture; to make it more useful than God has made it; to help the Holy Ghost, and to teach the Almighty how to express himfelf.

How abfurd would it be to fend Cook-Maids and Day-Labourers to study Aristotle and Suarez; to rake into the Jargon of the Schools; to learn all Languages, examine all Systems; and to discover of themselves all Errors, Interpolations and Mistakes, or to do what is much more ridiculous, that is, wholly throw themselves and their Salvation, in most Countries, upon a Confederacy of Men, who have an Interest to deceive and oppress them, and ever did so when they had an Opportunity who have been always at Variance with one another, and with themfelves; and have agreed in nothing but the milleading of those who trusted them ! And yet One of these must be the unhappy Circumstance of the greatest Part of Mankind, if what I have faid before is not true; which we may be fure the Divine Goodness Vildom has nid them from outimed mobility brought to Light in his own Time, and then

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Nothing is more evident from History, than that most, if not all, the Improvements and Reformations of Religion have been made, not only without, but in Opposition to these Men. There have been near a Million of them kept in constant Pay for the best Part of Seventeen Hundred Years, to teach the World by their Precepts, and reform it by their Example; and yet I am persuaded they will not pretend that Religion is plainer, the Scriptures better understood, or that Mankind are more wife or virtuous for all their Instructions. So little have we been benefited by their Labours, and for all the Money they have received! I wish I could not say that the World has gradually decreas'd in Piety and Virtue, as these its Teachers have advanced in Riches and Power. It is owned by the best of themselves.

It is the farthest from my Thoughts, by any Thing I have before faid, to undervalue their true Office, much less to make it useless. I fincerely think it absolutely necessary to the Peace and Happiness of Society. The Roman Consuls had an Officer attending their Triumphal Chariots, whose Business it was

to cry out Memento mori.

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I would have these too, answer the same End of their Institution; to press the Reading of the Scripture upon their Hearers; to shew their Excellency and Advantages; to inculcate the plain Precepts of Faith and Morality contained in them; and to demonstrate the

that he has laid down to us, in plain Words, every Duty which he requires of us, either to himself, our Neighbour, or our selves. But let them not distract, instead of instructing, and consound ignorant People with Metaphysical Subtilities, which the Wifest cannot comprehend. Let them not strain ridiculous and selfish Consequences from obscure Parts of Scripture, and make the Almighty mean what he never said.

Let them give us God's Will in God's Words.

of by their Labours, and for all the Mone Another End of their Office is to execute those Duties of our most Holy Religion, which the Word of God has left at large for every one to do, but which indeed are necesfary to be perform'd by fingle Perfons in the feveral Churches or Societies of Christians; fuch as reading the Scriptures and publick Prayers aloud to the Congregation, and administring the Sacraments: What by the Gospel Liberty is the Right of every one (as shall be unanswerably made out hereafter) is by the Confent of Voluntary and National Churches become the Dury and Business of particular Persons, who are fet aside and paid for that Purpole. or : noismiful sieds de bal.

In what I have before faid, I have the Concurrence of the best and wifest of our own Clergy, who acknowledge and contend that we are not to take the Almighty's Mean-

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ing at second Hand, nor receive that for his Will which we our selves do not find to be so; but that we are to enquire before we believe, and to be convinced before we assert every Assertion or Proposition, before it is examin'd, being alike to the Understanding, as every Colour is to the Blind: They own that our Judgment ought to be at no Man's Service, nor our Minds controuled in religious Matters, but by God alone; for as no Man's Soul can be saved by Proxy, so no Man ought to exercise his Faith by Proxy.

Every Day's Experience proves that we all-mulare with tive (x, a, m, u, v) keep, as well in our Sentiments, as in the Airc and Mein

are rold that the Brahmunt, in India do, by long Habit, to diffort their Limbs, that they grow in the Situation which they are put the

Wednesday, February 17. 1720.

The Unfitness of the Clergy to Teach Others.

S in my last Paper, I hope, I have fully shewn that Clergymen have no Right to interpret the Scriptures for other People; so I shall endeavour in this, to prove that they are the least qualify d, for the most Part, to do so, of any

Set or Society of Men, in their present State of Learning and Virtue. This I do with a fincere Design to serve Them, as well as the Lairy; hoping that when they see from what Source the Neglect and Contempt, which they so much complain of, proceed, they will join heartily in their own Reformation, in answering the Ends of their Institution, and in being hereaster as useful to their Country, as many of them have been formerly mischievous.

Use makes every Posture familiar to the Body, and every Opinion to the Mind. We are told that the Brahmans, in India, do, by long Habit, so distort their Limbs, that they grow in the Situation which they are put in. Every Day's Experience proves that we assimulate with the Company we keep, as well in our Sentiments, as in the Aire and Mein of our Bodies. Not only different Nations, but often Sects, Professions, and Trades, are to be known by their Phiz and Behaviour. A Sailor, or a Taylor, (to say nothing of their Betters) may be found out, however they disguise themselves.

Nothing but keeping the best Company can give a free and easy Carriage; and an open and generous Conversation alone can disengage our Minds from the strong Impressions of our Early Education. The Habit of thinking freely, and of expressing freely those Thoughts on all Occasions, enables us to judge well of Men and Things. Our Minds

are polished by Collision, and a liberal Conversation not only starts all Difficulties, but

folves them; if they are to be folved.

Almighty God give us Faculties to use them; and it is Ingratitude, as well as Folly, to return the Gift upon his Hands. Truth can never suffer by an impartial Examination, but on the contrary will receive Strength and Advantage from it. It is Error and Imposture alone, which dread a fair Enquiry, as being conscious of their own Weakness.

whatever Body or Society of Men are most restrained by themselves or others, from Reafoning freely on every Subject, and especially on the most important of all, are the least qualify'd to be the Guides and Directors of

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Circumstance of the Clergy in most Countries. They are no sooner discharged from the Nurse and the Mother, but they are delivered over to Spiritual Pædagogues, who have seldom the Capacity, and never the Honesty and Courage, to venture at a Free Thought themselves, and must consequently be improper Channels to convey any to their Pupils.

From thence they are fent to the Universities (very commonly upon Charity) where they are hamstringed and manacled with early Oaths and Subscriptions, and obliged to twear to Notions before they know what they

they are. Their Business afterwards is not to find out what is Truth, but to defend the received System, and to maintain those Doctrines which are to maintain them. Not only their present Revenues and Subsistence, but all their Expectations are annexed to certain Opinions, established for the most Part by Popes and Synods, in corrupt and ignorant Ages, and even then often carried by Faction and Bribery, in Concert with the Designs and Intrigues of Statesmen; but are sanctify d by Time, and are now to be received without Enquiry.

No one can fairly examine what is Truth, who has an Interest on either Side of the Question. We are bribed by our Inclinations, in Spite of our best Resolutions. Who can be heartily angry at an Opinion, which will keep a Coach and Six, or strenuously endeavour to find out any Heresy in it? Besides, all Men are fond of Respect and Homage, and when they are in Possession, will esteem it but an unprositable Study to find out that they do not deserve them.

As Glergymen so educated cannot, for the Reasons aforesaid, be fair and impartial Judges themselves of what is Truth, so their Authority can give but little Weight to such Doctrines as they may think sit to teach to others. The first Question ask'd of a suspected Witness in every Court of Judicature is, Whether he gets or loses by the Success of the Cause? And, if either appears, he is con-

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constantly feed aside, and not retusted with

Man's Pretences ought to be try'd by the fame Test and Rule, and where the Evidence of a Proposition cannot be clearly shown by one who has an Interest to advance it, nor proved by Miracles, all other Persons have Reason to suspect it of Imposture. When what he offers will indisputably conduce to his own Benefit, and I have only his Word that it will conduce to mine, I cannot doubt but his Kindness is greater for himself than for me, and shall consequently believe that he is not doing my Business, but his own.

The Apostles, and some of the first Christians, did not so teach Christ. They not only convinced Mankind of the Truth of what they said by Miracles; but made it apparent to all the World, that they sought no Temporal Benefit; but, on the contrary, left their Families, their Professions, and all the Comforts of Life, to wander about the Earth, and preach a Doctrine infinitely advantageous to the present, as well as eternal State of others; and expected no Reward to themselves in this Life, but Beggary, Stripes, and even Death it self.

It is not to be wondered that no Discourses, or even distant Hints, are countenanced for permitted in Universities Abroad, which have the least Tendency to oppose the Pride or Temporal Grandeur of the Clergy; nor any

any Speculations suffered to be vented there, which ever so little break in upon received Opinions. It is not only a certain Stop to all Hopes of Preferment, to question the Truth of any of their darling Notions; but you are in Danger of being expelled, and are fure to be discountenanced and contemned.

The Philosophy and Learning there taught, and encouraged, are exactly calculated and adapted to this State of Darkness and Ignorance: They are nothing but an unintelligible Jargon of undefined Words and bare Sounds, which mean nothing, and yet can prove every Thing. With this Gibberish they are diverted from sound Knowledge, by being put upon a wrong Scent; and are hindered from attaining true Wisdom, by believing that they have got it.

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All Attempts towards useful Learning are neglected and discouraged; and nothing is found out to be true in Philosophy, but is made false in Religion; and the Authors and Discoverers are branded with Herefy, if not Atheism; of which the Examples are infinite.

young Ecclefiastick commences Governour and Director of Mens Consciences. He is impatient of the least Contradiction, and is all in a Flame at an Opposition which he has not been used to. As he never questioned the Truth of any his own Notions himself, he grows outrageous at any one else who does,

does, and immediately cries out aloud for nt of the Day

Fire and Faggot.

To this it is owing that the Difference between the controverfial Writings of Gentlemen, and those of Divines, is so very remarkable. The first are carried on for the most Part with Humanity, and always with good Manners, even when the Matter is most poignant and farcastical. In the Latter. at first Sight, appears the Odium Theologorum; and Rage, Ill-breeding, and Revenge. breathe thro every Part of them. A proper Difficition this to make Converts, and govern the World! Lonings on one

This Temper has (even in England) shewn it felf visibly, in their Treatment of a modern Bishop, whom neither his great Penetration, his pious Life, nor the pretended Regard to his paftoral Function, could protect from Ecclefialtical Hatred and Fury, for his having dared to engage in the Interest of

Mankind.

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As it is undeniably true, that what I have before described is the unhappy Circumstance of the Clergy, in most Countries; so no Man, who has the least Desire to promote useful Knowledge, true Virtue, and found Religion amongst Mankind, but must endeavour to manumit them from this State of Servitude and Darkness, even the they should oppose it themselves. Birds and Beasts used to Lodges or Dens, are afraid to go out of them; and even Men long shut up in dark

dark Dungeons, cannot for some Time bear the Light of the Day: Galley Slaves not knowing what to do with Liberty given them, have often, of their own accord, return'd to their Chains; nay, God's own People themselves longed again for Egyptian Flesh-pots, and Egyptian Slavery, when they were fed with Food from Heaven; notwithstanding which, Moses would not gratify their brutish Appetites, but made them Happy in Spite of themselves.

I would therefore have every Clergyman enjoy the full Liberty which every Layman enjoys. We are not confined in our Searches after Truth; and why should the Clergy be confined, in whose Hands it is more powerful and advantageous than in ours? The granting of Ecclesiassical Freedom to Churchmen is as equitable as that of Civil Freedom to Laymen. I thank God, We posses a glorious Portion of the latter; and I heartily wish Them an equal Portion of the former.

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Wednesday, February 24. 1720.

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Of Creeds and Confessions of Faith.

Have shewn in my Fourth Paper, the Boldness and Absurdity of the Exposition of Holy Scripture, when that Exposition is maintained and imposed for Canonical Truth. I shall here

profecute the same Subject merely as it relates to Creeds and Confessions of Faith.

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In our Disputes with the Church of Rome, we contend that the Scripture alone is a sufficient Rule of Faith and Practice; and our Divines have proved it unanswerably. But when our High Church Priests argue with Dissenters, and those whom they are pleased to christen Hereticks, Holy Writ is not so highly complemented: It is then very subject to lead us into Mistakes, and hard to be understood. It is true it is infallible, and was given us from Heaven to be a Light unto our Feet, and a Lamp unto our Paths; but still it is dark and insuffi-

insufficient without Human Aid and Explication. For, though it be exceeding plain to us of the Established Church of England, and proves us to be in the Right in every Article, Ceremony and Habit whatfoever; yet it is utterly hid from those who will not accept of our Guidance, and fubmit to our Authority. And therefore if they refuse to believe and obey our Supplements and Improvements of the Bible, and to accept of the Salvation, which is to be had in our Church, and the Church of Rome, they shall have no Salvation at all. It is fit and Orthodox that Men should perish for follow their Consciences, and for understanding the Scripture without the Leave of the Ordinary,

Thus when they debate with the Papists. they praise the Scriptures, inveigh against the imposing of Opinions, and speak in the Stile of Dissenters. But when they are pleased to rebuke Non conformists, they borrow the Language of Papists, and urge the Authority of our Apostolick Church, and her divine Right to judge for others; and deal hard Language and worfe Usage to all that take the same Privilege which they do. There is, however, this fmall Difference between us Conformists and the Schismaticks: We have good pay for being Orthodox, and the Separatist pays dear for being in the Wrong. If these are not two good Reasons for delivering him over to Satan, I despair of finding bet-Carber but full it is darlo and

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In Consequence of this Power in High-Churchmen to be the Mouthsmen of the Bible, which if we take their Word cannot speak for it self, they claim a Right to make Creeds for others: And this is what I am now to examine.

I think it but Justice to the Goodness of God to affirm, that Belief or Disbelief can neither be a Virtue or a Crime in any One, who uses the best Means in his Power of being informed. If a Proposition is evident, we cannot avoid believing it; and where is the Merit or Piety of a necessary Assent? If it is not evident, we cannot help rejecting it, or doubting of it; and where is the Crime of not performing Impossibilities, or not believing what does not appear to us to be true? Are Men who have good Eyes, the more righteous for seeing? Or do they offend in seeing too well? Or do blind Men sin, in not distinguishing Colours?

When we clearly see the Connexion of a Proposition, or know that we have God's Word for it, our Assent is inevitable. But if we neither comprehend it our selves, nor see God's Authority for it, and yet swallow it, this is Credulity, and not divine Faith, which can have nothing less than divine Truth for its Object. When we are sure that God Almighty speaks to us, we readily believe him who cannot lie, nor be mistaken, nor deceive us: But when Men speak, though from God himself, our Belief in them is but human Con-

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fidence,

fidence, if we have only their own Authority that they had it from God: Their being Bishops, their being learned, their meeting together in Synods; all this alters not the Case: We can judge of their Opinions no otherwise than as of the Opinions of Men, and of their Decisions, but as of human Decisions.

When the Articles of any Creed appear to be contained in Scripture, whoever believes that, does in Consequence believe them; and then such Creed is unnecessary: But when we cannot, or think we cannot, find them in Scripture, and yet give equal Credit to them, we depreciate and profane the divine Authority it self, by accepting the Words of Man's Invention as wifer and more significant than the Words of God's own choosing.

We are fure that the Scripture Phrases were inspired by the Holy Ghost, and as sure that our own Forms and Injunctions are Human, and framed by Priests. It is thereforestrange, that the former should be insufficient and unintelligible, and the latter infallible, and to be embraced and obey'd on the pain of Damnation; and that the Priests must do what God Almighty has, without Success, endeavoured to do.

Besides, as the Imposition of human Creeds is contrary to Reason, so is it also to Charity. They were generally made in a Passion, not to edify, but to plague those for whom, or rather against whom they were intended. They were the Engines of Wrath and Vengeance,

geance, nor could they ferve any other Pur-pose. Those who believed them already, did not want them; and those who disbelieved them, were not the better for them. But this was not the worst of it; for they who did not receive them against their Conscience, were curs'd; and they who did, deferved it. So that either the Wrath of God on one Hand. or the Wrath and Cruelty of the Clergy on the other, was unavoidable. If People faid they believed, and did not, they mocked God and shipwrecked their Souls; and if they did not believe and owned it, though they faved their Souls, they provoked their Reverend Fathers, and were destroyed.

Whenever these Dictators in Faith had a Mind to be mifchievous, and to undo one who gave them fignal Offence, either by his good Reputation, or good Bifhoprick, they began his Ruin by their great Care for his Soul; and so invented a Creed for him, which ruined him effectually, by giving him, as they faid, to Satan, but, in Truth, to Beggary, Stripes, or Flames. He therefore who had any Virtue or Religion, was a certain Sufferer by thefe Systems of Faith, which were contrived for that Purpose. The Man that had no Confcience nor Honesty, was not worthy of their Anger; or, which is most likely, was on the Orthodox fide, or at least quickly became a Convert to it, being, like themselves, able to swallow any Thing: bharavan aladi nan't and a share a share

So that Creeds, as they were the Result of Revenge, Pride, or Avarice, so were they the constant Preludes and Introductions to Ignorance, Cruelty and Blood; and the wretched Laity were crassily, as well as inhumanly, made the deluded and unnatural Instruments of Butchering one another, to prove the Infallibility of the Faith-Makers; who, while they were wantonly shedding Christian Blood, and dooming to Damnation those who called upon the Name of the true God, had the shameless Assurance to miscal themselves the

Amballadors of the meek Jesus.

And indeed, what better could be expected from Men to chosen, so unqualify'd, and so interested, as the Members of these general Creed-making Councils for the most Part were? They were chosen from several Parts by a Majority of Votes; and they who were most aspiring, factious or crafty, carried it They Iprung from the meanest of the People; They were bred in Cells: They popped into the World without Experience or Breeding : They knew little of Mankind, and less of Government, and had not the common Qualifications of Gentlemen: They were governed by Pallion, and led by Expectation: And, either eager for Preferment, or imparient of milling it, they were the perpetual Flatterers, or Disturbers of Princes.

These were the Men, this their Character. When these Reverend Fathers were got together in a Body, by the Order of a Prince or

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a Pope; who, having his Necessities, or the Ends of his Ambition to ferve, chose proper Tools for those Purposes; they were directed to form such Creeds and Systems of Faith, as his present Views or Interests made requisite

for Mankind to believe.

In this new Employment every Member, we may be fure, was forward to shew his Talents in flarting new Tenets, or in contradicting those already started, and so to make himself considerable enough for that Preferment which he was refolved to earn one way or another. And this being the great Aim of them all, Jealousies and hard Words were carried to the most violent Pitch. There was no End of their Wrangling and Reviling. Not content to abuse each other by Word of Mouth, they fometimes scolded in Writing; and every Reverend Father drew up a bitter Billingate Petition against another Reverend Father. Sometimes, not fatisfied with Vollies of Seurrility, unheard of in Assemblies of Gentlemen, they had Recourse to Club-Law, and made good their Inventions and Distinctions with Blows and Blood. And if the Truth could not be found out by Scolding, Contradiction, and Battle, it was not found out at all mi ylden of son adeim on O

Thus any Emperor or Pope might have what Creed he pleased, provided he would be at the Pains and Price of it. And for the rest of Mankind, they had this short Choice.

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Wednesday, March 2. 1720.

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INCE all the most idle and visionary Pretences of the Popish and popishly affected Clergy, have their Ends, and their Danger, and therefore should be narrowly watched, and vigorously opposed; I shall in this Paper enquire into the Validity of a principal Claim of theirs, I mean that of Uninterrupted Succession; and endeavour to find whether there is any Foundation to support this Corner-stone of their Authority, except in their own wild Imaginations.

One might reasonably imagine, that a Doctrine of so much Importance to the temporal and eternal State of all Mankind, should be expressly laid down, and fully explained in the Holy Scriptures, to prevent all Possibility of Mistake about it. But, instead of this, the Word, as far as I remember, is not once mentioned

tioned there, nor any other Word equivalent to it; so that we are under a Necessity of recurring to the Clergy themselves for Information: And here too we are as much bewildered as before; for some of them boldly as-

fert it, and others flatly deny it.

Besides, those who hate and damn one another, claim it equally to themselves, and deny it to all others. Those who are Successors to the Apostles in England, disown their Brother Successors beyond the Tweed and about the Lake; and they their Brother Successors at Rome; and they theirs at Greece and Armenia, as well as every where elfe. Now all these, who so confidently assume the Succefforship to themselves alone, are as opposite to each other in Sentiments and Worthip as Light is to Darkness. They cannot therefore all have it; and if only one has it, how shall we know who he is? No Man's Testimony ought to be taken in his own Case; and, if we take that of other People, there are twenty to one against them all.

If the Clergy of the Church of England, as by Law established, are, of all the Reformed, supposed to enjoy this Line of Entail entire to themselves; pray, how came they by it? Not from the Reformation, which began not till near fisteen Centuries after the Apostles were dead; and Cranmer owned Ordination then to be no more than a Civil Appoinment to an Ecclesiastical Office. It is certain, at that Time this Utopian Succes-

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fion was not so much as thought of by any who embraced the Protestant Religon. At present, indeed, and for a good while past, the Jacobite High Clergy contend for it with equal Modesty and Truth. But, in Order to adopt it, they are forced to drop the Refor-

mation; for,

You must know, courteous Reader, that this same Succession is now deduced from Rome, and the Pope has had the keeping of it; who, by all that adhered to the Reformation, was held to be Antichrist, and the Man of Sin. He was often an Atheist, often an Adulterer, often a Murtherer, and always an Usurper; and his Church has constantly lived in gross Idolatry, and subsisted by Ignorance, Frauds, Rapine, Cruelty, and all the blackest Vices. It is certain, she was full of Wickedness and Abomination, and void of all Goodness and Virtue, but that of having kept the Apostolick Orders pure and undefiled for our modern High-Churchmen.

However, I think they themselves seem to be now sensible, that it will be a difficult Matter to make out, this Way, their Kindred to the Apostles, without being nearer akin to Popery; they are therefore forced to own the Church of Rome to be a true Church. But, I would beg Leave to observe here, that as there is no conversing here with a Chimney-sweeper without catching some of his Soot; so we ought not to be surprized if, in succeeding to the Orders of that Church,

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they also succeed to most of her good Qualities, and if the Liquor finells strongly of the Cask. I confess, amongst us Laymen, it would look a little abfurd, if any one should gravely affert, that, ' indeed Lais was a filthy Strumpet, and no virtuous Woman could converfe with her; but, for all that, ' she was a true Virgin, and all Chastity was deriv'd from her!

But fuch Absurdities as these go for nothing amongst some Sorts of Ecclesiasticks. We will therefore, in the next Place, enquire what it is which they would fucceed to. The Apostles had no Ambition, Jurisdiction, Dignities, or Revenues; to which they could be Successors. We read not in Scripture one. Word of Ecclefiastical Princes, Popes, Patriarchs, Primates, &c. On the contrary, our Saviour himself declares, that his Kingdom is not of this World; and when the young Man in the Gospel (St. Matth. Ch. 19th) asked of him, What he should do to obtain eternal Life? He answer'd, that, besides keeping the Commandments, he should fell all that he had, and give it to the Poor. N. B. He did not bid him give a Penny to the Priefts.

In the 20th Chap, of the same Gospel, our Saviour takes Notice to his Disciples, that the Princes of this World exercise Dominion over them; but, fays he, it shall not be so amongst TOU; but whoever will be great as mongst you, let him be your Minister; and whoever will be Chief, let him be your Servant.

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Nay, he fays that even the Son of Man came not to be ministred unto, but to minister. In the 23d Chap, he condemns the Scribes and Pharisees, for loving the uppermost Rooms, and the chief Seats in the Synagogue; and their defiring to be called of Men, Rabbi; and he forbids all this Pride to his Disciples as well as his other Hearers; and orders them not to call one another Mafter; for one, fays he, is your Master, even Christ, and he that is greatest among you shall be your Servant. Nor do I find that, while he was upon Earth, he laid Claim to any Power but to do the Will of him that fent him. Indeed, after his Refurrection, he tells his Disciples that all Power is given to him in Heaven and in Earth; and he bids them teach it to all Nations, and baptize them in the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; but he does not give them the least Power, or Dominion, of any Kind whatfoever.

And it is plain that his Disciples understood him so. St. Paul tells the Corinthians, in his 2d Epistle to them, Chap. 1. that they had not Dominion over their Faith, but were Helpers of their Joy. In the fourth Chap. of the same Epistle, he tells them, that they preach not themselves, but Christ Jesus their Lord, and themselves THEIR Servants for Jesus sake. In the first Epistle to the Corinthians, Chap. 3. he admonishes them not to glory in Men, no not in himself, nor Apollos, nor Cephas; and tells the People, that even

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the Apostles themselves, and all Things are THEIRS, and they are Christ's, and Christ is God's. In the 9th Chap, he tells them, that tho' he is free from all Men, yet he has made himself SERVANT unto all, that he might gain the more. St. Peter also, in his first Epistle, Chap. . c. exhorts the Elders to feed the Flock of Christ, and to take the Overlight thereof, not by Constraint, but willingly; not for filthy Lucre, but of a ready Mind; neither as being LORDS over God's Heritage, but as being Examples to the Flock.

Now either these Elders were Clergymen, or they were not: If they were Clergymen, their pretended Successors may see upon what Terms they are to be Feeders, and Overseers of the Flock of Christ: But, if they were only Laymen, then it is plain that no other Qualifications were necessary to a Spiritual Shepherd, than a willing, difinterested, and humble Mind; and all Subjection is, in the 5th Verse, commanded to be reciprocal— Likewife, ye Younger, Submit your selves to the Elders: Yea, all of you be subject to one another, and be cloathed with Humility; for God resisteth the Proud, and giveth Grace to the Humble.

For my felf, I confess that I am not Master enough of any Language to find Words more expressive, or which can more fully renounce all Sorts of Jurisdiction and Dominion, than those in the Passages which I have here quoted: And nothing can be more ridi-

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ridiculous, as well as impious, than to oppole them with equivocal, doubtful, and figurative Expressions. If the Popish Priests could but find out one fuch clear Text on their Side, how would they gallop away on the Ridge of it, till they had rode themselves out of Breath, and the Laity out of their Sen-

fes, and their Estares!

As I have made it fully appear, that the Apostles understood our Saviour in this Sense; so it is evident, that the first Christians had not the least Apprehension that the Apostles claimed any Power or Authority to themselves. They were poor Men, of mean and mechanical Professions, who left Fathers, Mothers, Children, Families, Trades, and renounced all the good Things of this World, to wander about it, and preach Christ. Their Difinterestedness and Sufferings were powerful Arguments of the Truth of their Doctines: Whereas, if they had told their Hearers, in the modern High-Church Strain, that as foon as they became our Converts, they " became also their Spiritual Subjects; That " they themselves were Ecclesiastical Princes; and that Spiritual Government was as much more Excellent than the Civil, as Heaven was than Earth, yea much more fo; That the Episcopal Homour, and sublime Dignity, could not be equalled by the Glory of Kings, and the Diadems of Princes; That Kings and Queens ought to bow down to the Priests with their Face towards the Earth, and lick up the Dust of their Feet-with whole Volumes

Volumes more of fuch blasphemous Trash, as is vended by Dr. Hicks, Mr. Leflie, and indeed by almost all the High-Church Writers; and yet not publickly disapproved, or censured by the Convocation, or any Body of the Clergy, tho' they have shewn an outrageous Enmity to all who have afferted the contrary Principles. If the Apostles had told them too, that they themselves had a Right, not only to the Tenth Part of their Estates, but of their Labour, and that fince they (their Hearers) administered so many Things to a King, who administers Peace and War for Bodily Safety; how ought they not to administer more liberally to him, who administers the Priesthood towards God, and secures both Body and Soul by his Prayers?

I fay, if any of this Choice Fustian had been broach'd to the World, at the first Opening of the Gospel, what Progress could Christianity have made? How could the Apostles have been disinterested Witnesses of the Truth of the Doctrines, which gave them such Jurist diction, Dominion and Riches? And how justly would the Princes and Powers of the Earth have punished such Usurpations upon their Civil and Ecclesiastical Authority?

The Silence alone of the Enemies to Christianity, is a sufficient Consutation of this wicked and black Calumny, cast upon them by their pretended Successors; but which their bitterest Opposers had more Modesty than to charge them with, the they range of the stack'd

fack'd Earth and Hell for all other Sorts of Scandal.

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Wednesday, March 9. 1720.

Of Uninterrupted Succession. Part 2.

R. Tillotson, in his Sermon against Transubstantiation, tells us, that "it "might well seem strange if any "Man should write a Book to "prove that an Egg is not an Elephant, "and that a Musquet Bullet is not a Pike." He might have added, that this was the hard Circumstance the Laity were reduced to in their Disputes about Religion with most Sets of Ecclesiasticks; and, what is still worse, when they had proved these Things, they were never the better.

The greatest Part of Mankind have learned to judge of Religious Matters, by other Faculties and Senses than those which God Almighty has given them. The first Thing they are taught is, that Reason may be on one

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one Side of the Question, and Truth on the other; which Maxim being well established, there will be an End of all Reasoning ever after; and there can be no Criterion between Truth and Falshood: But those, who, by Education and Custom, have once got Possession of their Superstition and Fears, may impose upon them what crafty and ad-

vantageous Doctrines they pleafe.

By these Means the Christian Religion, most easy and intelligible in it felf, and adapted to the meanest Capacities, is become, in most Countries, a Metaphysical Science, made up of useless Subtilties, and insignificant Distinctions; calculated to gratify the Pride of Corrupt Clergymen, by making them admired and reverenced by the People, for their profound Knowledge and deep Learning; and confequently Religion is wholly left to their Care and Conduct, as being infinitely above poor Lay-Apprehensions. And to this, the World is beholding for the Depravation of Virtue and Morality; and for all the Domination, Pomp and Riches of the Popili Priesthood.

Therefore, I hope no one will condemn an Undertaking intended to restore Christianity to its Primitive Innocence, and Native Simplicity; to oppose Common Sense against Pompous Nonsense, and Learned Absurdity; and to shew how, and in what Meaning, The Kingdom of Heaven is said to be Revealed to Babes and Sucklings, and hid from the

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Learned and Wife: That is to fay, it is easily learned and known, by those who make Use of their Natural Faculties, and Uncorrupted Reason; but will always be hid from fuch, who hunt after it in the Schools of the Philosophers, or in any ambitious and factious Assemblies and Synods of Popish Ecclesiasticks. I shall therefore endeavour to keep this plain and easy Subject clear of all vain Philosophy, and Metaphysical Gibberish, with which the Adversaries always attempt to entangle it; as knowing well, that if they can but make it Unintelligible, their Authority alone will decide every Question in their own Favour.

As I conceive I have fully shewn, in my last Paper, that the Apostles claimed no Jurisdiction, Authority, or Coercive Power, of any Kind whatfoever, over their Hearers; but only obey'd the Will of their Master, in delivering a Message from Heaven, for the infinite Benefit of Mankind; and to prove their Mission, brought their Credentials, namely, The Power of doing Miracles, along with them: So I shall shew, that what Power they had, (except that which was miraculous, and died with them;) or, to speak more properly, what Right they had to perform the Duties and Offices of Christianity, did not defeend to one Christian more than another; but that all were empowered alike to exercife alike the Functions of their most Holy Religion. When

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When a Command is given from God to Men, to do and perform any Action, it is not only the Right of every One, but it becomes his Duty, to execute it himself, when he is capable of doing it; unless the Precept directs some other Manner of Performance: And whoever afferts that it does, is oblig'd to prove it. And he must not be surprized, if in a Case of this great Consequence, we shall expect plain and direct Texts, describing the Extent of the Power demanded, and the Persons to whom it is given. It will not do his Business to pick up Two or Three scatter'd and disjointed Sentences, and putting them upon the Rack, torture them till they confess what they never meant, against the whole Current of Scripture. It must be laid down plainly and directly, and made obvious to the meanest Capacities; not depending upon the Criticisms of Rabbinical Learning; nor fublimated from Jewish and Heathen Traditions; nor extorted from doubtful, equivocal, and unintelligible Expressions. It is not confistent with the Goodness of God, to fuffer a Power, upon which the Being of Christianity, and the Temporal and Eternal Happiness of all the World depends, to remain in Obscurity and Darkness; and therefore we may be fure, that whatever of this Kind does fo, is the Invention of ambitious and wicked Men, and not the Will of the great and good God.

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It will be incumbent on them to shew one clear and direct Text, where our Saviour confines the Administration of the Sacraments to any Set of Men whatfoever. The contrary of which is so evident, that there is not in Scripture one Instance where the Sacrament of our Lord's Supper was ever Adminifired by any One, who, in our Translation of the New Testament, is stiled Bishop or Presbyter. And it is as plain, that the Right of Baptizing belonged to all Christians equally. Both which, I shall make out unan-swerably hereafter, in separate Papers. I shall also shew that the Demagorgon, or boasted Power of Excommunication, is nothing else but a Liberty which every Man has over his own Actions, in conversing or mingling with what Society he pleases; or, at most, only a Precept or Exhortation, not to keep ill Company, and to remove fuch, or feparate from them.

But to proceed with my Subject: If a Chain of Uninterrupted Succession had been necessary, an Uninterrupted Course of Talents, Grace and Abilities, superior to those of all other Lay-Christians, had been necessary also, to have made the Clergy resemble those whom they were to succeed in an Employment which required the Highest. But there is no such peculiar Genius or Virtue sound amongst them. They are qualify d by Means evidently Human for this Divine Calling. They are sent to Schools and Universities to

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learn to be Successors to the Apostles: (I will not say of them, what Mr. Dodwell says of the Jewish Priests, that they make use of Wine, among st other Bodily Helps, to obtain the prophetick Spirit:) And all who have the same Sense and Opportunities, thrive at least as fast as those who are Candidates for the Priesthood; and might, if they pleased, apply their Learning to the same Uses. And as to Grace, Piety, and Humanity, I think verily the Modesty of the Glergy will not let them pretend to excel their Lay Neighbours in those Endowments.

The Apostles were inspired, had the Gift of working Miracles, could bestow the Holy Ghost, and had the Discernment of Spirits; and were consequently proper Judges of Mens Fitness for the Ministry, and could confer that Fitness. Our Modern Divines are not inspired, cannot work Miracles, nor give the Holy Ghost; nor can many of them even find out their own Spirit, so far are they from

discerning that of other People.

The Apostles were a Set of extraordinary Persons, appointed by the Son of God to convert all Nations, and had extraordinary Endowments given them for that End. Their pretended Successors are a Race of very ordinary Men, possess of no extraordinary Abilities; sent by no Divine Authority; nor to Convert any Nation; but only take up a Trade to get a Livelihood.

Christ's Apostles were Pen-Men of the Holy Ghost, and writ Books of Scripture:

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But, pray, what New Gospel do our Modern Apostles give us? (I wish None of them had ever confounded the Old!) They are at best but Nore-Makers and Commentators; in which Characters Laymen have succeeded as well, even by their own Acknowledgment.

Minellius and Gronovius have written Notes upon Virgil and Livy: Pray, are they Successors to Virgil and Livy, for that Reason & And are the stupid Dutch Commentators Successors to the great Roman Orator, because they have slept over his Works, and darken'd them with Illustrations & Or is every One who sails to America for Gain, a Successor to Christopher Columbus, who discovered and pointed out the Way to the New World?

The great Bufiness and Commission of the Apostles, was to Convert Mankind. Now, I would be glad to know how they can be fueceeded in a Thing, which could be done but once; and in Countries, where it is already done: I mean, the Converting of a Nation, suppose Greece, England, or any other. What must the Yews have thought of a Set of hair-heained Ifraelites, who would have demanded of them vast Respect and Revenues, for succeeding Mofes in redeeming them from Captivity to Pharaoh, and for leading them every Day of their Lives out of the Land of Agypt, Seventeen Hundred Years after they had left it? Or could any Number of Fews succeed Nehemiah in bringing back the Captive Tribes from Persia, and Babylon? Can

Can any one succeed the Duke of Marlborough, in fighting the Battle of Hochtsted, and relieving the German Empire? I presume, every Foot-Soldier is not a Successor to Alexander the Great; nor every Serjeant of the Guards descended in a Military Line from Julius Casar.

N. B. Having shewn that the Apostles have lest no Successors, there is an End of the Question, Whether their No-Succession is Interrupted, or not? But my Respect to the High Clergy obliging me to give them all Advantages, I will, in some suture Paper, admit that such a Succession had once a Being; and then will undeniably prove that it has been frequently, I may almost say constantly, interrupted and broken, under all those Heads which they make necessary to the Continuance of it.



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Wednesday, March 16. 1720 1 5721

Of the Clearness of Scripture.

Shall in this Paper endeavour to confirm what I have faid in my last; by shewing, that God Almighty, in revealing his Will to

Mankind, has always taken effectual Care that it could not be mistaken, and therefore made it so plain, as to need no farther Explanation, in all Things which are necessary for us to know.

When God would have his Pleasure known to Men, it is agreeable to his Goodness to make it evident; when he would not, it is agreeable to his Wisdom to make it impenetrable. Scripture was not given to make work for Interpreters; nor to teach Men how to doubt, but how to live. The Holy Spirit has made undeniably clear and manifest, all those Precepts which enjoin Faith and Obedience, which

which are the great Points of Religion; and weak Men cannot correct him, and do it

better themselves.

Parents

I think it is generally granted, that Revelations are no more, and that Prophecy hath ceased. The Reason given for this, I take to be a very good one; namely, that God has already sufficiently discovered his Mind to Men, and made his Meaning manifest. If it were otherwise, we should doubtless have his extraordinary Presence still; but as we have not, it is to be prefumed there is no Occasion. He appeared himself whilst Men were in Darkness; but now that he hath shewn them his marvellous Light, he appears no more. His Presence is supplied by his Word; which being addressed to all Men equally, and not to one Tribe of Men to interpret it for the rest, it follows, that all Men have in their Power the Means to understand it. Old Revelation therefore does not want the Assistance of New, nor has the Omnipotent any need of Prolocutors.

While God is delivering his Law to the World, he is plain even to Exactness; and his Orders are full and circumstantial even about the minutest Points. This is eminently proved by his Manner of giving Laws to the Jews. Every Ceremony, and every Instrument and Garment, used in their Worship, is precisely described and directed. The Trumpets, the Candlesticks, the Lamps, the Spoons, the Spuffers, are all of his own Appointment,

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both as to the Materials and the Use of them. He makes it impossible to mistake him. He calls the Priests by their Names, points out their Persons, and shews them every Branch of their Office. He limits and governs their Behaviour while they are about it; and does not leave it to their Wisdom to invent such Postures and Ceremonies, as they think fit to call decent and significant. They had not the Privilege to chuse their own Garments. Moses, who was the Civil Magistrate, had it in his Charge to Sanctify and Confecrate their Persons. Their Business in the Sacrifices, is pointed out to them: They are to put their Hands upon the Head of the Beaft, and to receive its Blood. and to make Fires. They are not, as I remember, once made use of to speak God's Mind to his People; that is the Duty and Commission of the Civil Magistrate, and Moses performs it. They had not the least Hand in the Celebrating of the Passaver, the Jewish Sacrament, to which ours of the Lord's Supper hath, it is faid, succeeded: And as little were they employed in that other of Circumcision, the reputed Ancestor of Baptism. In short, their whole Function was to be Servants and Journeymen in the House of Sacrifice.

If Almighty God was thus punctual and particular in the Rituals and Outlide of his Worship, can we imagine that he was defective or obscure, in declaring the more weighty Points of the Law? No — When our first

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Parents broke the Covenant, they did it wilfully, and could not pretend that they underflood it not; Of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, thou shalt not eat of it, was all the Injunction that was laid upon them: And there was no need of a Commentator here. The Text might have been rendered

more perplext, but not more plain.

The Covenant which he made with Abrabam was not less clear. He was to be the God of Abraham and of his Seed; and every Male of his Race, and those that were bought with Money, were to be circumcised. There were no more Words to this Contract; and the Patriarch and his Issue had but one short System of Divinity, most intelligible of it self, and in no wise darkened with Glosses.

The Decalogue, or the Law of the Ten Commandments, delivered by God himself from Mount Sinai, with great Glory and astonishing Circumstances, was little else but the Law of Nature reduced into Tables, and expressed in Words of God's own chusing; and they were worthy of the Omnipotent and Infallible Author; for they were so plain and indisputable, that not a single Person of all the Twelve Tribes, so addicted on other Occasions to Contradiction and Wrangling, so much as pretended not to understand them: Nor was there one Man, much less a Body of Men, set apart to explain them.

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When God spoke to the Fews by his Prophets, the same Method of Clearness was obferved. The Admonitions given, and the Judgments denounced, were adapted to the Capacity of every one concerned. The Fews, it is true, did not often believe them, at least not mind them; but it was never pleaded that they did not comprehend them. God inspired, and the Prophets spake, and all understood; but neither Creeds nor Paraphrases were made, for they were not necessary. At last, indeed the Priests and Pharisees made void the Word of God by their Traditions, and very rigidly tithing Mint and Cummin, neglected the greater Things of the Law, and taught for Doctrines the Commandments of Men. But we know what Thanks and Character they had for their Pains from the Saviour of the World, and what a terrible Doom he pronounced against them. Read the 23d Chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel, and see the Description of these vile Hypocrites, and then confider whether they be at this Day without Heirs and Successors. Indeed it seems to me to be the only Succession which has not been interrupted. I algun asson sada alda tuqlibni

The Gospel, when it came, as it was to excel all other Laws, in its Ends and Usefulness, so was it the shortest and plainest Institution in the World. It only added the Duty of Faith to that of good Works, which was the great, if not the only, Business of the Moral Law. To believe that Jesus Christ

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was the only Son of God, was the great Principle of the Christian Religion. Nor was the Practice of this Belief attended with the least Difficulty, since our Saviour proved his Mission and Omnipotence, by Miracles that were undeniable and convincing. For the Truth of them he appealed to Men's Senses, and there was neither Mystery nor Jugling in his Actions, nor did they want any Body to explain them.

All this is further confirmed by the Conduct of the Apostles. The constant Drift and Tenour of their Lives and Preaching, was to perswade Mankind to believe in Jesus Christ. In order to which they worked Miracles, and gave the Holy Ghost. The Precept was thus short, and the Motives to comply with it, were thus irressible. Hence it was, that sometimes Thousands were convinced in a Moment, without either Commentaries, or Creeds, or Catechisms. And indeed who could avoid believing a Proposition that proved it self?

The Apostles, when they had converted one City, did not stay to establish a Hierarchy there only, and to tell the same Thing over and over again to those that knew it already. No, — when they had planted the Faith in one Place, they travelled to another, and preached the Gospel to the unconverted World; leaving those already converted, to perform Christian Worship their own Way. If they believed in Christ, and lived soberly, the Apostles

Apostles desired no more. Those were the Two Things needful; nor were they more need-

Fractice of this fielief arrended real lut In this plain manner did God Almighty always discover himself and his Will, whenever he dispensed his Laws to the World. On the other Hand, while he hid himself from the Heathen World, did their Priests ever discover him? No. - they had Deities without Number; they worshipped Stocks and Stones. Trees, Rivers, Bulls, Serpents, Monkeys and Garlick. Both their Religion and their Gods were of the Priefts making, and therefore we may be fure they were hopeful Ones. They created their Deities after their own Likeness; angry, cruel, coverous and lustful. Their Mysteries were full of Horror, Obsceneness. Craft and Delusion. The Will of their God was fearched in the Guts and Ordure of dead Beafts, and a Coop of Chickens were his Privy Counfellors. His Favour or Displeasure depended upon their Craws ; if they had puny Stomacks, the God was in a Fit of the Spleen; if Ravenous, he was in a giving Humour, and would grant you any Thing, even to the Cutting of the Throats of a whole Army, or Burning of a City, or Plundering a Province: And when he was tired of his Kindness to you, he would perhaps in a Day or Two, do all this for your Enemy synon when a storin guivest

Upon the whole, when Almighty God reveals his Will, he does it effectually; but Anofiles when

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when he disguises it in dark and doubtful Expressions, it is plain the Time of making himself further known to Men, is not yet come, and it is in vain for them to pry into his Secrets.

The all-merciful Being does never require of us, that which we cannot find he requires. It is not confiftent with his Wisdom and Goodness, to make that necessary which he hath not made plain. He has with the greatest Perspicuity, described the Candlesticks, Tongs, and other Tools of Worship under the Jewish Law; and yet in the Gospel has not faid one Word of fome Doctrines, which we are told are necessary to Salvation. Altars and Priests are divinely appointed in the Old Dispensation, but are neither directed nor described in the New; and yet we know of what Importance they are at present in the Popish Church and elsewhere. The Priest's Office is particularized and circumscribed, even to the Killing of a Goat, or a Pair of Pigeons; and yet under the Gospel it is not so much as hinted, that a Priest shall administer either of the Sacraments; though, if we will take their own Words for it, there can be no Sacrament without them. In the Levitical Law, the Sons of Levi are expresly appointed to be Priests continually; but it is not once faid in the Christian Law, that there must be an uninterrupted Race of Bishops, or Popes, or Priests, to the End of the World; and that there can be no Church where it

as left in Doubt.

As by the Law of Moles, the Priest's Office and Duty were minutely described, so their Maintenance was ascertained: But by the Law of Christ, there is not any Priesthood at all appointed, (as I shall fully make out hereafter) and confequently no certain Provision made for them. It is indeed faid, that The Labourer is worthy of his Hire; and I acknowledge it is fit that those who hire them should pay them: Bur sure this Text leaves every one at Liberty to chuse his own Labourer, and to make as good a Bargain as he can, or to do his own Business himself. What Pretence is there of a Divine Right to just a Tenth Part; and not only of our Estates, but of our Stock and Industry too, which in some Corn Lands comes to Double the Rent that the Landlord receives?

The Tribe of Levi amongst the Jews were the Twelfth Tribe of Israel, and, in the Division of the Lands, had a Right to the Twelfth Share, without any Regard had to their Priestly Office; and consequently were allowed but a very small Proportion towards their Hire, and much less than, I doubt, their pretended Successors would be satisfy d with. I would therefore, as a sin-

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cere Friend to their Order, recommend to their Consideration, whether it would not be most adviseable, to quit their Divine Right, and be even content with the Laws of the Land.

claration and Hale Orders, block convey no-

Phylogo to exercise a Martin Calling, doting Good Ba: X long a m w N: than the, what he after the bland of a falliop land up-

Wednesday, March 23. 1720.

on the Head of a stripling, who feeks Pro-

Of Ordination.

fon, or Endownscotts, or Spirit of the Parey

Take Honesty and Knowledge to be the Essential Talents required for the Work of the Ministry: The One is acquired by Study, and the Other depends upon the Disposition of the Heart, or the Grace of God. Therefore he, who has a Capacity to Teach and Edify, has a Right to do Both.

Those who are Candidates for the Priest-hood, carry their Qualifications along with them; and having passed Examination, receive a Power from the Bishop, which he receives from the Law, to put these Qualifications in Practice. But, if upon Trial, they

are found insufficient, they are, or ought to

be rejected.

A Physician does not receive from the College an Ability to practice; but only a Declaration that he already has it. Such a Declaration are Holy Orders: They convey nothing; neither Righteoufness, nor Learning, nor Wisdom. They are only a Diploma or Privilege to exercise a certain Calling, during Good Behaviour. Any further than this, what fignifies the Hand of a Bishop laid upon the Head of a Stripling, who feeks Promotion or a Livelihood? If that Hand puts any Thing into that Head, I would ask what it is, and how does it appear? What Alteration for the Better is to be found in the Perfon, or Endowments, or Spirit of the Party Ordained? How does it appear that he has any Moral Sufficiency which he had not before? Or any Spiritual Gift, besides that which he carries Home in his Pocker; and which was confer'd by the Bishop's Secretary for a Fee? Can there be any new Ability or Character without some Marks of it? Or is there an Alteration without a Change? It is an unconceivable Mystery to me, that the same Man should be another Man! I have known many a Man's Pride fwell, and his Morals decay, after Orders; but very feldom his Manners or his Capacity enriched by them. He who has the Spirit, will do the Works of the Spirit: By their Fruits ye shall know them. The Thing, were it true, is very capable of Proof. in seed, it could not be hid nor difputed.

puted. On the contrary, when neither the Heart is mended, nor the Understanding enlightened, it is manifest that the Holy Ghost has nothing to do with either of them.

A Learned and Virtuous Layman can in-Aruct more effectually, and pray more devoutly and fuccefsfully, than an ignorant and profane Priest; and is consequently a more proper and fecure Guide to others. To fay that he has no Call, is no more than to fay that he has not enter'd his Name: Besides, it is false; for I will lay it down as a Proposition which I will abide by, that He who has a Power to do Good, has a Call to do Good; and the promoting of Virtue, and securing of Souls, is doing the greatest Good of all. St. James tells us, that the effectual fervent Prayer of a Righteous Man availeth much; but he does not fay that he must be in Orders, or that he must perform the same in a consecrated Place: Tho' the Convocation, in the latter Part of the Queen's Reign, thought fit to differ with the Apostle in this Point.

Apollos, without any Call at all, but from his own Abilities, being an Eloquent Man, and Mighty in the Scriptures, and instructed in the Way of the Lord, and fervent in the Spirit, spake and taught ditigently the Things of the Lord, and boldly in the Synagogue. It is plain he was not Ordained, unless it was by the Tent-Maker and his Wife, Aquilla and Priscilla: And that he had not the Holy Ghost, is also plain, for that he knew only

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the Baptism of John; and so they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the Way of God more perfectly. (Acts xviii. v. 24, &c.)

I doubt the Holy Ghost is too often made free with in Popish Countries, upon the Occasion of Young Mens taking Orders. I believe it will be found that their Motives are much more Temporal. It is consider'd as a fecular Employment, as much as any other; and the Labour of a Clergyman is as evidently Bought and Sold, as that of an Attorney or any Tradesman. Besides, the Way to this Calling is easy and obvious: Where is the Difficulty of learning a little Greek, or chopping a little Logick, and of getting by Heart a few Questions in School-Divinity? Nay, there are many Ordained there, even without any of these momentous Accomplishdoes not lay that he pad his

There are some who take the Orders of Clergymen, and yet never exercise the Function of Clergymen, either thro' Idleness, or Weakness. Does the Holy Ghost call Mento the Work of the Ministry, not to do the Work of the Ministry? Or does he call Mento an Office, without giving them Gifts and Grace to perform it? It was not so in the Apostles Days, when God inspired all whom he sent; and where the Divine Commission or Call was given, a Door of Utterance was also given. But there were then no Sine Cures, no great Revenues; no great Doctors, not small Curates.

It is evident, that neither the Church of Rome in general, nor any of its Bishops in particular, believe a Word of this pretended Call of the Holy Ghost, in the Business of taking Orders. For, by the Canons, the Person demanding Ordination, is to be examined as to his Capacity for the Ministry, and must produce a Certificate as to the Innocence and Morality of his Life; both which were unnecessary, if there was any Proof or Assurance of his Call from God. And the Questions asked him upon that Occasion, are such as demand no more than ordinary Human Aid to answer them. Nor is it at all expected of him that the Goodness of his Life should exceed that of other Laymen: If it is as good, it is well.

Whenever the Holy Ghost was given, it was given upon some extraordinary Occasion, for the doing of some extraordinary Action; as it was to the Apostles, for converting the Heathen World. They fliewed the Power which they had, by the Wonders which they did; and gave effectual Evident ces that they were divinely affifted. But fome modern Priests, who have no extraordinary Work to do, affert, notwithstanding, that they have an extraordinary Call from the Spirit; which would also infer his extraordinary Affistance. But they say it without shewing it, and pretend to it without proving it. It is a Happiness that we are not obliged to take their Word; for the Faith it bas!

felf be the Evidence of Things not seen, yet still it is the Evidence; that is, Proof must

precede Belief.

When the Popish Clergy are charged with Frailties. Vices and Immoralities, they then confess the Truth, and are pleased to become Flesh and Blood as well as other Men, and Subject to the like Infirmities and Passions; and if they faid greater, we could readily believe them. But when a Point of Gain or Dominion is to be contended for, they grow all of a sudden more than Men; They are then the Lord's Ambassadours, Successors to the Apostles, a Sacred Society; and the Lord knows how many more fine Things. Now this Management is very unlucky for them, and full of palpable Contradiction; for if they had a greater Share of God's Grace and Spirit than others, it would be especially evident in the fuperior Piery of their Lives, fince Holiness is shewn in Practice: Whereas the Spirit of this World manifelts it self in the Love of Power and Wealth; and hence those who pursue them are called Worldly Minded, in Opposition to God's Elect, who are the Spiritual Minded. I need not recommend it to fuch Clergy, which to chufe, Carnal Minds with Riches and Authority, or Heavenly Mindedness without them. It is certain that the Apostles were as pious as

Occasion, be meant no more than a serious and

and devout Bent of Mind to administer in the Publick Worship of God, as some Reverend Divines, Lovers of Truth, do, I think, confess; then is the Claim of a Divine Mission and successive Right utterly at an End; and the taking of Orders is no more than raking a Licence to perform a religious Office, for which every religious intelligent Man is

already qualify'd.

And indeed such a Man is, without the Confent of any Bishop, entitled to be a Pastor, in the Scripture Sense of the Word, the not to receive the legal Wages of a Pastor. He may preach and pray, and deliver the Sacrament, when Temporal Laws do not restrain him; but cannot take Tithes, which are annexed to certain Conditions and Opinions established by the State. As every State has its own Religion, so almost every Religion is directed and modelled by some State, and therefore they, who are Orthodox Conformilts in one, are often Schismatical Dissenters in another. But fuch is the fingular Modesty and Submission of the Clergy, that they, in most Countries, humbly acquiesce in the established Faith; and not only meekly accept of all the Ecclefiaftical Power and Revenues to themfelves, but gratefully condefcend to perfecute all those Consciences that are not as complaifant and fupple as their own. And indeed, it is but generous in them to be zealous for those Notions and Ceremonies, which

which bring them Reverence and Hire: But methinks it is a little unreasonable to expect that others should, without their Motives, adopt their Zeal! 2 mont along neterly at an End:

P. S. Having in my last Paper afferted, that there is no particular Priesthood at all direfted by the New Testament I am told it is from thence furmized by fome, thro' Malice, and by others, thro Mistake, that I do by this infinuate, that there is therefore no Occasion for any Church-Ministry whatsoever, notwithstanding my former Declarations upon this Head. I particularly fay in my Third Paper, speaking of the Clergy!

Their Office is evidently adapted to promote the Welfare of Human Nature, and to propagate its Peace and Prosperity in this World, as well as its eternal Felicity f in the next: fo that it is the Interest of all 5 Men to honour it: and none but a Madman fiwill condemn and ridicule what has a maf nifest Tendency to the Security and Happifoness of all Mankind, bold returned off et

I fay also in my Fourth Paper, that I fincerely think their Office to be absolutely necessaey to the Peace and Happiness of Society. I could likewife refer to other Passages. But to give full Satisfaction once for all, to fuch as will be fatisfy'd, I declare that I do only contend for the Right of every National and Voluntary Society to appoint their own Pastors, and to judge of their Doctrines and donde

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Behaviour: Further than this I have no Aim. Nor do I desire to lessen the Respect due to the Clergy from their Merit and Usefulness; or the Dignities, Privileges, and Revenues which they derive from the Law, or from the good Will and Contributions of the People. And I intend very soon to defend the Church of England upon the Principles and Authority of the Scripture and the Law; as well as the Toleration granted to Dissenters by the same Law, and the same Scripture.

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Boxes; whoreas floatify and Sincerity appear always baromod, and flow chemicities most in open Day stagev teem all indirect Advantages, and borrowed Helps, but fruit

of my Jemper to a visit March 30 w 1720 motion of the High Clorey, against the Free High Clorey, against the Free High Clorey, against the Free Age, and the Liberty of the Peter St.

The Advantageous Situation of the Clergy, frangely inconfistent with their common Cry of Danger.

IRTUE and Innocence were created naked and undifguised, nor did our first Parents cover themselves till they had offended. Truth

can never fin, and therefore need not, and ought

ought not, ever to appear in Masquerade: She is most amiable when most uncovered; and appears truly Majestick, and in greatest Lustre, when disrobed of all gaudy and affected Ornaments: Her Natural Features want no Varnish or Colouring, nor has she any need

of Dreffers and Tire-Women.

Knavery and Deformity alone want Daubing and Disguise. Actors do not care that any one should look into the Tiring-Room, nor Juglers or Sharpers into their Hands or Boxes; whereas Honesty and Sincerity appear always barefaced, and shew themselves most in open Day; they scorn all indirect Advantages, and borrowed Helps, but trust alone to their own native Beauty and intrinsick Strength: The Lion is never known to

use Cunning.

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I confess, that I am not Master enough of my Temper to avoid Laughter, and Indignation, by Turns, at the noify Clamours of the High Clergy, against the Freedom of the Age, and the Liberty of the Press; as if Virtue was inconsistent with Good Sense, or Truth could suffer by Knowledge, or Religion by a free and thorough Examination. What Figure would a grave Lawyer make in Westminster-Hall, if, after he had been tiring his Auditors for Two Hours together, he should defire the Judges not to hear the Counsel of the other Side, lest they should perplex the Cause, and missead the Court.

Every Stander-by would take it for granted, that he was conscious of the Weakness of his Client's Cause, and that it could no otherwise be defended, than by being not understood. This is, in Point, the Case of those, who demand of all Mankind to be heard by the Clock, and will yet hear no Body; who talk and rail by Wholesale, whilst they cannot bear a single Jest, or ludicrous Expression; and who write Volumes by the Yard themselves, and are in an Uproar, and Outrageous, at a single Half-Sheet of other

Peoples.

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How abfurd would it appear for an Army of an Hundred Thousand Men, entrench'd up to the Ears, to call aloud for the Affiftance of the Constable and Watch, to defend their Camp against the Affaults and Storms of Highwaymen and House breakers ! Just fuch a Request do the Popish Clergy Abroad make, when they cry out, Fire, Fire! Help. Help! and demand the Affistance of the Secular Power; and infift, that no Sermons be preached, Books printed, or Harangues made. but their own. They have already more Ada vantages than Truth can defire, and indeed enough to offend her Modefly, and to make her albamed and blufb; they are too well armed for a fair Advertary, and yet are always complaining of the Shortness of their Weapons; and declaring themselves over come, by calling our for more Help in and land of pour in upon them like an laund

Besides the Piety and Example of their Lives, they are vastly numerous, and in Possession of great and various Dignities, and immense Revenues and Dependencies; are all bred up to Letters; have the Prejudices of the People, the sole Education of Youth, the Fears as well as the Favours of the sair Sex on their Side; and have the Weekly Opportunity of haranguing to the People upon their own Usefulness and Importance: And they tell us too, they have a sole Right to the Scripture Prophecy, That the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against them.

Crown'd Heads always have thought it their Interest to keep Measures with them: Ministers of State are not able to Trick fuccefsfully, and play the Knave, without their Leave and Affiftance: They take Advantage; and make their Market of all Factions and Disturbances in States, and apply them to their own Benefit: Knaves shelter themselves under their Protection; Hypocrites court and feem to admire them, and Bigots and Enthufiasts adore them. Every Event of Life contributes to their Interests: They Christen: they Educate; they Marry; they Church; they Bury; they Perswade; they Frighten; they Govern; and scarce any Thing is done without them. Notwithstanding all this, they roar aloud, that they cannot keep their Ground, but that Contempt and Infidelity pour in upon them like an Inundation. Polides And

And yet it is very remarkable, that the first Christians were not only destitute of all the before-mentioned Advantages, but their Enemies enjoyed them; and they themselves were persecuted and contemned, buffeted, ridiculed and calumniated, in constant Books and Libels, published by the greatest Philosophers and Wits of the Heathen World; and yet Christianity every Day spread far and wide, and made a wonderful Progress; infomuch, that in an Age or Two, Superstition and Idolatry were driven from a great Part of

the Earth.

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A Speculation upon this Head, and an Enquiry into the Causes of so prodigious a Change, would be worthy the Endeavours of the brightest Wits and Genius's of our Age and Country, who undoubtedly must be found amongst our own genuine Clergy. I have long wished to see a Differtation upon this great and useful Subject; and with the greatest Humility propose to the Consideration of the Lower House of Convocation at their next (fo much defired) Meeting, to give the the World their Thoughts upon it, in a Second Representation of the Causes of Vice and Infidelity: And in Hopes to encourage them in fo publick an Undertaking, I intend before that Happy Day, to give them my poor Assistance, and in some Measure to alleviate their Labours, by endeavouring to prove that no Part of this Misfortune ought to be laid at the Door of the Laity.

Indeed, it would be unbecoming the Respect and Reverence, which I have always professed, and hope shall always pay to these Reverend Gentlemen, to but hint at any Thing fo improbable as the contrary Conjecture: For fince Human Nature is always the fame, who can entertain fo undecent a Thought of their Designs, or have such a Contempt of their Performances, as to imagine that Mankind can grow worfe under the Light of the Gospel, and in Desiance of their pious Lives and Examples; and of the numerous Forms of publick and private Pray er; their constant Sermons, and godly Exhortations; and of fo many Creeds, Catethisms, Systems, Commentaries, and whole Cart-Loads of other ghostly Geer, which the World is every Day blefs'd with from the laborious Endeavours of above a Million of Ecclefiafticks, or more; who have always; and do still, cost the People more than their whole Civil and Military Expence put together? Therefore, fince we may be fure that this great Change and Degeneracy cannot be owing to any remaining Defect amongst the Laity, it may well be expected from Persons of their Penetration and Perspicuity, to let us into the true Caufes of fo furprizing a Phanomenon.

In the mean Time, (tho' with all the due Submiffion of an humble Votary) I shall for once prefume to advise them, not to level so many Batteries against good Sense and human Reason, which are impregnably fortified and secure against the siercest Assaults. A great Philosopher tells us, when Reason is against a Man, a Man will be against Reason; and therefore I much fear if these my Friends, and Patrons, should continue to hold forth and exert their Eloquence against Private Judgment, Freedom of Enquiry, and a daily and diligent Search after a religious Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, that the World may mistake their Endeavours, and imagine all these good Things make against them; and yet unfortunately they are in such Repute, that there are little Hopes of depreciating or putting them out of Countenance.

Besides, I humbly conceive it to be impolitick upon other Accounts too. It appears to me to be very indiscreet in Persons Militant, to endeavour to put an End to a War, which for the most part puts an End to themselves and their own Pay. A jovial Country Parson once in a merry Mood, passing by a Waggon which was overturn'd, told the Carter that he had kill'd the Devil; to which the profane Wretch reply'd, that he was glad of it with all his Heart, because then, quoth Ralph, I have spoiled your Trade. A Word

to the Wife is fufficient.

Methinks also, it should be doing too much Credit to his Satanick Majesty, to suppose him more than a Match for a Million of consecrated Persons, with all their Hierarchial Powers, and, as they say, Divine Assistances about them.

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Number XII.

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epaired a Man, a Man will be against Realon's

oca Reafon, which are imprography foreith-

Wednesday, April 6. 1720.

The Enmity of the High Clergy to the Reformation, and their Arts to Defeat the End of it.

Achiavel advises any One, who would change the Constitution of a State, to keep as much as possible to the old Forms, for then the

People seeing the same Officers, the same Formalities, Courts of Justice, and other outward Appearances, are insensible of the Alteration, and believe themselves in Possession of their old Government.

Thus, Casar, when he seized the Roman Liberties, caused himself to be chosen Dictator, (which was an Ancient Office) continued the Senate, the Consuls, the Tribunes, the Censors, and all other Powers of the Common-Wealth; and yet changed Rome from the most Free, to the most Tyrannical Government in the World:

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This Policy is yet more necessary to be observed in altering the Religion of a Country; for very sew Persons, of any Sect of Party in Faith, are conversant with the Speculations or distinguishing Tenets of their own Church, or so much as know what they are.

Whilst they see the same broad-brim'd Hats, Bands, Cassocks, and Long Gowns; and hear the same Psalms sung in the same Tone, and in the same fashioned Buildings; they think they have the same Religion, and will be angry with any one who shall tell them

ways oppoied every Step towarewarence way

But if the Ceremonies or other Forms of Religious Worship are to be altered too, the Change must be made insensibly, and by Degrees, that the Difference may be unobserved, or thought of no Consequence; and all Advantages must be taken of Revolutions in Government, of Publick Calamities, and of Factions, when they beat high, and are ready to fall into any Measures to oppose and mortify each other.

The Priesthood in all Ages have made these Arts, and a Thousand others, contribute to their Greatness; and the High-Church Jacobite Clergy of England have put them all in Practice to regain every Thing they lost at the Reformation; and if they could but have prevailed upon their Flocks to have followed them, they had long ago sold them again in the Roman Market: But since we of the Lai-

ty are so refractory, and hang backward, they now seem resolved to gallop away by themselves, and leave us to come our own Pace after; insomuch that a Clergyman of the Church of England, as by Law Established, is, at present, become a most agreeable Sight, and many of his Brethren treat him as a Monster.

It must be evident to any one, who has read our Ecclesiastical Story, that the Reformation in England was carry'd on, not only without, but against the Consent of the whole Body of the Clergy, (very sew excepted) who always opposed every Step towards their own Amendment: It was, indeed, every where, properly speaking, an Effort, or Insurrection of the Laity, against the Pride and Oppression of the Priess, who had cheated them of their Estates, imposed upon their Consciences, debauched their Wives, and were ever insulting their Persons.

The poor Injured People had long felt the Malady, but were so intimidated by their own Superstition, and the over-grown Power of their haughty Masters, that they durst not think of a Remedy, till a bold and disobliged Friar or Two disloved the Enchantment; and then the whole Christian World seemed to rise at once against this Fairy and Fantasti-

cal Empire. Inco voda in ima

But People long used to Servitude, knowing not what Freedom is, or how to preserve it when thrown into their Laps, have always.

Recourse

Recourse to some Leaders, of whose Honesty and greater Wisdom they have conceived an Opinion; and these for the most Part abuse such Considence, to advance their own Views

of Wealth and Power.

So it happened in this Cafe; and confequently the Reformation went partially on, according to the Direction under which it fell: Where Priests were at the Head of it, they attempted only to make it a Reformation of Sounds and Distinctions: They took no Offence at the Riches and Grandeur of the Clergy, (which was the Source of all other Evils) but were angry that they had not their Share of them; and so look'd upon the Revolt only as a Means to aggrandize themselves: They condemned not the Tyranny, but the Tyrants; and attempted to usurp that Power in their own Persons, which they loudly exclaimed against in the Romish Priesthood: Most Sets of them wonderfully well agreed, that there was a Divine Right in the Clergy to dictate to the Laity in Religious Matters; but every Sect claimed that Power to themselves, independent of all others.

They cou'd not agree about sharing the Prey, but each would have had the Whole; which had this good Effect however, that they were all obliged to abate much of their Pretensions, in order to engage Customers; and, I thank God, they have not yet been able to raise the Price again to the old Market; tho, to do them Justice, they are no Ways answer-

able

able to their Successors, for having let slip any

Opportunity to that Purpole.

But whilft they were thus carrying on their Project for Dominion, they found it necessary to throw out a Barrel to the Whale, and keep the Peoples Minds busied, and their Passions assoat, with Metaphysical Subtilties and Distinctions, of no Use to true Religion and Morality, the very conducive to their own ambitious and tyrannical Designs.

I would gladly know from these Reverend Venders of Trifles, whether it would have been worth the Thousandth Part of the Combustion which has been made, or the Blood which has been spilt, only to settle a few Speculations, if they could have been fettled? Pray where is the effential Difference between Transubstantiation, Consubstantiation, and the Real Presence? What the Consequence, whether a Child be baptized by one fort of Priests, or by another? Or of what Use to Mankind are the abstruct Ouestions about Predestination, Free-Will, or Free Grace? What is the Difference, as to the Duties or Ordinances of Christianity, if they are administred under the Direction of a single Person, a Bench of Bishops, or a Lower House of Convocation, or none of them all, so they be piously administred? Or whether the chimerical Line of Succession is broken, or ever had a Being ? or son level voils show should

Since 'tis agreed amongst all our present Sects of Christians, that the Saviour of the World

World is the Son of God, descended from Heaven to teach Virtue and Goodness to Men, and to die for our Redemption; how are we concerned in the Scholastick Notions of the Trinity? Will the Scripture be more regarded, or the Precepts of it be better observed, if the Three Persons are believed to be Three Divine distinct Spirits and Minds, who are so many real subsisting Persons? Whether the Son and Holy Ghost are Omnipotent of themselves, or are subordinate and dependent on the Father? Or if they are independent, whether their Union consists in a mutual Consciousness of one another's Thoughts and Designs, or in any Thing elfe? Whether they are Three Attributes of God, viz. Goodness, Wisdom and Power? Or Three internal Acts, viz. Creation, Redemption and Sanctification? Or Two internal Acts of the One sublitting Person of the Father; that is to fay, the Father understanding and willing himself and his own Perfections? Or Three internal Relations, namely, the Divine Substance and Godhead confider'd as Unbegotten, Begotten and Proceeding? Or Three Names of God afcribed to him in Holy Scripture, as he is Father of all Things, as he did inhabit in an extraordinary Manner in the Man Jefus Chrift, and as he effected every Thing by his Spirit, or his Energy and Power? Or laftly, whether the Three Persons are only Three Beings, but what fore of Beings we heither G 4 know.

know, nor ought to pretend to know; which I rake to be the Trinity of the Mob, as well as of some other wifer Heads.

As far as I can remember, these are the important Questions which have fet Mankind together by the Ears, for so many Ages; and it seems are yet thought of Consequence enough to create new Fewds, and mortal Dudgeon amongst all our Sets of Ecclefiasticks. But why must we of the Laity guarrel about them too? What have Beaus and Belles, old Women, Coblers and Milk-Maids to do with Homoousios, Consubstantiality, Personality. Hypostatical Union, Infinite Satisfaction, &c. none of which hard Words, or any like them, are to be found in Scripture; and therefore, I think, we may even return them to Rome, that being the Place from whence they came, and be contented to be good Christians without them.

We ought to shew our Faith and Obedience to God, by a chearful Submission to his Commands, and not affect a vain Curiofity of prying into his Secrets; pretend to Philosophize upon his abstracted Nature and Effence; and with our limited and corrupt Understandings, assume to comprehend infinite Wisdom and Power, and define the Modus of its Existence and Operations. Almighty God would not make himself farther known even to Moses, nor suffer himself to be otherwise described to the Children of Isreel (tho' to get them out of the Land of Bon-

know.

Bondage) than by the comprehensive Words, I am that I am; which methinks might baffle our officious Impertinence, and put us in Mind of the Danger of peeping into the Ark.

The above Disputes make us neither wifer nor better: Men are not intended for Speculation; exceeding few are capable of it: The Faculties of our Minds, as well as the Frame of our Bodies, are adapted to Labour, and to supply the Exigencies of our Nature: We are formed for Society and mutual Help, and the Goodness of God has implanted in us Qualities fuited to these Ends; and, besides, has given us Precepts for our Affiftance, and annexed infinite Rewards to the Observance of them. We know how to be good Parents, good Children, good Neighbours, and good Subjects; but how small a Part of Mankind understand, or are capable of understanding Metaphysical Questions! When they use the Terms, it is plain they have no Ideas annexed to them, but fight at Blind-Man's Buff, and guarrel about what none of them understand: It is evident therefore that the Allwife Providence could not intend to perplex and confound weak Minds with fuch Subrilties, for the Knowledge of which he has not given them fuitable Qualifications. an an Opportunity put by Heaven into their



bus .



NUMBER XIII.

Wednesday, April 13. 1720.

The Church proved a Creature of the Civil Power, by Ads of Parliament, and the Oaths of the Clergy.

Have observed, in my last Paper, that many of the Protestant Priests endeavoured to divert the growing Spirit in the Christian World for Reformation, to Metaphysical and useless Speculations, of no Benefit to the present or eternal Happiness of Mankind, whilst they were seating themselves at leisure in their Prodecessors Chairs.

But far otherwise was it where it fell under the Direction of Laymen, who consider'd it as an Opportunity put by Heaven into their Hands, to free themselves from the Usurpations, and unjust Domination of the Priesthood: They made no Scruple (notwithstandstanding the loud Cry of Sacrilege) to seize and and apply to publick Uses, a great Part of those Riches, which the Clergy had extorted from old Women, and superstitious and enchanted Bigots; the Compositions for Murthers, for publick and private Robberies; the Plunder of dying and despairing Sinners, and the Supports of their own Idleness, Pride,

Ignorance and Debauchery.

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A bold and honest Physician (whose Name was Erastus) at this time started up, and told the World, that all thefe Squabbles of the Clergy about their own Power, were Disputes de lana caprina, and that none of them had any Right to what they almost all claimed: That the Quarrel amongst them was only which of them should oppress the Laity, who were independent of them all; for that their Ministers were their Servants, Creatures of their own making, and not of God Almighty's: He shewed them from Reason and Scripture, that every State had the same Authority of modelling their Ecclefiastical as Civil Government; that the Gospel gave no Preeminence, or Authority to Christians over one another, but every Man alike (who had fuitable Abilities) was qualified to execute all the Duties and Offices of their most holy Religion, and that it was only a Matter of Prudence and Convenience to appoint particular Persons to officiate for the rest, with proper Rewards and Encouragements; which Perfons would be intitled to no more Power than they themselves gave them. This

This Doctrine, as little as it pleased the Clergy, yet prevailed fo far with the Laity, that most Protestant States modelled their Ecclefiastical Polity according to their own Inclinations or Interests; and particularly, in England, the whole Reformation was built upon this Principle, which ever till lately, was esteemed the great Characteristick of the Church of England; and therefore 'tis the last Degree of Priestly Insolence for a Body of Men to call themselves the only true Churchmen, at the same time that they deny, and every where exclaim against, the fundamental and effential Article which distinguishes it from most other Churches, and particularly from Presbytery; for as to the rest of the Articles, the Calvinists are more Orthodox than the Churchmen themselves.

At the very Beginning of the Reformation, the Clergy here in England, conscious of their own Enormities, and the just Vengeance which hung over their Heads, were contented to disgorge their ill-gotten, and as ill used Power; and, in sull Convocation, threw themselves upon the King's Mercy, acknowledging his Supremacy in the sullest and most significant Words; and promised in verbo sacerdotis, that for the suture they would never presume to attempt, alledge, claim, or put in use, enact, or promulgate any Canons, Constitutions, or Ordinances, without the King's most Royal Licence and Assent had thereunto; and humbly besought his Majesty to appoint Thirty

Two Persons, half Clergy and half Laity, to examine the Canons and Constitutions in being, and to abrogate and confirm them, as

they should think good.

This Petition was changed into an Act of Parliament by the 25th of Hen. the VIIIth, Cap. 19. But it is there declared, That the Crown and Convocation together, shall not put in Execution any Canons, Constitution, or Ordinances, which shall be contrariant or repugnant to the King's Prerogative, or the Laws of the Kingdom: The same Statute also gives an Appeal from the supreme Ecclesiasti-

cal Court, to the King's Commission.

In the same Session of Parliament, the Manner of Proceeding upon the Conge d' Elire is directed, viz. * A Licence from the Crown is to be sent to the Chapter to choose or elect an Archbishop or Bishop, and a Letter missive with it, to nominate the Person they are to choose; which if they do not obey, nor signify the same, according to the Tenor of the Act, within Twenty Days, they are subjected to a Præmunire; and if the Election is not made within Twelve Days, the King may nominate a Bishop by Letters Patents without any Election at all, as is now done in Ireland, and formerly was so in Scotland, where their Bishops were durante bene placito.

appoints may exercic all

^{* 25} Hen. VIII. Cap. 20.

The next Year the Parliament * reciting that the King justly and rightly is, and ought to be supreme Head of the Church of England, enact the same, and that he shall have full Power to visit, redress, reform, correct, and restrain all Errors, Herefies, Abuses, Offences, Contempts, and Enormities, whatsoever they be, which by any manner of spiritual Authority or Jurisdiction, ought or may

be reformed, redreffed, dec.

Afterwards, in the 37th Year of the fame Reign, the Parliament, reciting that the Bishop of Rame and his Adherents, minding utterly to abolish, obscure, and delete the Power given by God to the Princes of the Earth, whereby they might get and gather to themselves the Rule and Government of the World, had decreed, that no Layman might exercise Ecclehaftical Jurisdiction, lest their false and ufurp'd Power which they pretended to have in Christ's Church might decay, wax vile, and be of no Reputation, (which Power they affirm to be contrary to the Word of God, and to his Majesty's most high Prerogative) and reciting alfo, That Archbishops, Bishops, Archdeacons, and other Ecclefiaftical Persons. have no manner of Jurifdiction Ecclefiaffical, but by, from, and under the King's Majesty; enacts, That Laymen, qualified as the Law appoints, may exercise all Parts of Ecclesia-

²⁶ H. 8. Cap. 1.

stical Jurisdiction, and all Censures and Coercions appertaining, or in any wife belonging thereunto.

The 2d and 3d of Edward the Sixth, Cap. 1. enacts the Common-Prayer Book, (which was before compiled and drawn up by the King's

Authority) and makes it a Law.

The 3d and 4th of Edward the Sixth, Cap. 12. appoints fuch Form and Manner of making and confectating Archbishops, Bishops, Priefts, and Deacons, and other Ministers of the Church, as by Six Prelates, and Six other Men of this Realm, by the King to be appointed and affigned, or by the greater Number of them, shall be devised, &c. and none other. These two Acts were confirmed with fome Alterations, in the 5th and 6th Year of and Minifers, which were addeding box

The Ist of Queen Elizabeth, Cap. I. establishes and enacts, That all Jurisdictions? Privileges, Superiorities, and Pre-eminences, Spiritual and Ecclefiastical, at any Time lawfully used, or exercised, for the Visitation of the Ecclesiastical State or Persons, and for the Reformation, Order, and Correction of the fame; and of all manner of Errors, Herefles, Schisms, Abuses, Contempts, Offences, and Enormities, shall be annexed to the Imperial Grown of this Realm; and gives Power and Authority to it to appoint any Persons, being natural born Subjects, to exercise all forts of Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction; and declares at the fame Time what, and what only, shall be deemed Herefy.

The Oath of Supremacy (which is an Affent to these Laws, and obliges those who take it, to assist and defend them) is appointed in this Act; which Oath all Ecclesiastical Persons, as well as any others, who shall be promoted and preferred to any Degree or Order in the University, are to take under severe Penalties.

The 8th of Queen Elizabeth, reciting that the Queen had in her Order and Disposition, all Jurisdiction, Power, and Authority, Eccle-fiastical as well as Civil; and had caused divers Archbishops and Bishops to be duly elected, and consecrated; does confirm all the said Elections and Consecrations; as also the Common-Prayer Book, and the Orders and Forms for the making of Priests, Deacons, and Ministers, which were added to it in the Fifth and Sixth Years of Edward the Sixth.

All which before mentioned Acts are now in being, in full Force, and fworn to by all the Clergy, who are subjected to a Præmu-

nire if they contradict them? I side the fort

Thus our Parliaments, at or just after the Reformation, whilst the Memory of Sacerdotal Oppressions continued in their Minds, were resolved to pare their Claws, curb their Insolence, and not leave it in their Power to corrupt Religion any more; and therefore put it under the Care of the Civil Magistrate, who could seldom have any Interest in perverting it: Whereas there is not any Instance when

when it has been left to the Conduct of any Set of Ecclefiasticks whatsoever, but they have abused and facrificed it to the Advance-

ment of their own Wealth and Power.

Even Aaron himself (though a High Priest of God's own Appointment) when Moses, the Civil Magistrate, was but a little while absent, to receive the Almighty's Commands, cheated the Ifraelites of their Earings, melted them into a Golden Calf, and encouraged the Boobies to fay, Thefe were the Gods which brought them out of the Land of Egypt. He built an Altar before his Idol, proclaimed a Fast, and then made use of all this Deceit to extort from that stupid and superstitious People, Burnt-Offerings and Peace-Offerings; which provoked Almighty God to that degree, that his Wrath was kindled against the whole Nation, and he was inclined to consume them all, till Moses, the Lay Soveragen, turned his fierce Wrath by his Prayers, and by remembring him of the Oath he sware to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, viz. that he would multiply their Seed like the Stars in Heaven, &c. And then it is true, that the Lord repented of the Evil which he thought to do unto them : But no Thanks to the Prieft who had drawn them into this Scrape, Exod. Chap. 32. syings ban belineghil nexto need

pulle Bilhops were aid deprived by Queen Eli-NEW Lome The leads of the Percental lergy were ejected by the Act of Uniformi-

King's Authority; and, in the Inflance of Archbilhop Lebot, for his Pleafure. The Pa-

NUMBER XIV.

Wednesday, April 20. 1720

The Clergy prov'd to be Creatures of the Civil Power, by the Canons, and their own publick Acts.

what is meant by the Supremacy of the Crown of England; by virtue of which, our Kings sometimes with, and sometimes without their Parliaments, have govern'd and modelled the Ecclesiastical State, ever since the Reformation. Bishops, as well as inferior Clergymen, have been often suspended and deprived by the King's Authority; and, in the Instance of Archbishop Abbot, for his Pleasure. The Popish Bishops were all deprived by Queen Elizabeth, and some Thousands of the Parochial Clergy were ejected by the Act of Uniformi-

ty; and many also of all Orders were de-

prived at the Revolution.

I shall now proceed to shew what have been the Opinions and Practice of the whole Body of the Ecclesiasticks, since the making of these Laws; in doing which I shall take Notice only of their publick and Authentick Acts; for as to the Whimseys of private Doctors, I think them of so little Weight, that I shall be assumed to quote them on either side of the Question.

Upon the Clergy's owning the King Head of the Church at the Reformation, all the Bishops took out Commissions for the exercifing their Ecclefiaftical Jurisdiction; which were renewed again upon his Son's coming to the Throne. In these Commissions, all Ecclefiaftical Jurisdiction is owned to proceed from the Crown, as from a supreme Head and Fountain and Spring of all Magistracy, in the Kingdom; and they acknowledge, that they executed it formerly only ex precario, and that now with grateful Minds they accepted the Favour from the King's Liberality and Indulgence, and would be always ready to yield it up again, when his Majesty pleased to require it.

These Commissions recited, amongst other Particulars of Spiritual Power, that of Ordaining Presbyters, and of Ecclesiastical Cor-

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The 2d Canon excommunicates every one who shall endeavour to hurt or extenuate the King's Authority in Ecclesiastical Cases, as it

declares he shall not be restored till he has publickly recanted such impious Errors.

The 37th Canon obliges all Persons, to their utmost, to keep and observe all and every one of the Statutes and Laws, made for restoring to the Crown, the antient Jurisdiction

it had over the Ecclefiastical State.

The 12th of King James's Canons declares, that whoever shall affirm that it is lawful for the Order either of Ministers or Laicks, to make Canons, Decrees, or Constitutions in Ecclesiastical Matters, without the King's Authority, and submits himself to be governed by them, is, ipso facto, excommunicated, and is not to be absolved before he has publickly tepented and renounced these Anabaptistical Errors.

Archbishop Bancroft, when at the Head of all the Bishops in England, he delivered Articles to King James against the Secular Courts, for encroaching upon the Ecclesiastical, owns, that all Jurisdictions, Ecclesiastical as well as Civil, are annex'd to the Imperial Crown of this Realm, as may be read more at large in the Lord Coke's Third Institute; which I would recommend to the perusal of every one, as a Specimen of the Difference between Ecclesiassicks and Laymen.

I shall think it necessary only here to add, that the Clergy have never presumed, by any publick Act, directly to contravert this Prerogative, or indeed but to nibble at it, unless in

one

one Instance during the last Reign; which the Queen resented highly; and she let the Convocation know, by a Letter to the Archbishop, that she was resolved to maintain her Supremacy, as a Fundamental Part of the Constitution

of the Church of England. O shirest of the

This is the Supremacy of the Crown; thefe are the genuine Principles of the Church of England; which whoever denies, may be a Papift, a Presbyterian, a Muggletonian, a Fifth Monarchy Man, or any Thing elfe, besides a Member of our Communion. This Doctrine, and these Opinions, have been acknowledg'd and fworn to by every Ecclefiastick fince the Reformation; and we daily fee they are All ready to fwear them over again upon any fresh Motives of Advantage; and fure no One will fuggeft, that the Whole Clergy of England have lived in the State of Perjury for near Two Hundred Years: I am fure, if this be the Cafe, it is not their Interest to let us know it, fince their Authority must be of very little Weight in any Thing elfe.

We have it here upon Oath, that all Jurifdiction, Power and Authority, Spiritual or
Ecclefiaftical, of what Kind or Sort soever it
be, does flow from, and is derived from the
King's Majesty; and I readily allow them to
have all the rest by Divine Right. They have
been always very happy at Distinctions and
Discoveries, and therefore if they can find out
any Power or Authority, which is of no Kind
or Sort what soever, I think they ought to

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have

with it; and shall own it always to be Sacriledge in any One who shall attempt to take it from them; but, if there is any such Thing, it is plain it belongs to them as Governours of the Invisible Church, and is of a Nature

we know nothing of

For it is certain, that Archbishops and Bishops are Creatures of the Civil Power, and derive their Being and Existence from it; They are chosen by the Direction of One Act of Parliament, and ordained and confecrated according to a Model prescribed by Another; in which Those who Officiate, act only Ministerially; and all other Methods of choosing them which the Clergy can devife, are declared void and ineffectual, and will not convey any Spiritual Power at all; nor, I dare fay, will any Clergyman in England pay Submission to such a Choice, if he does not like the Man; nor if he does, provided he thinks that he shall lofe any Thing by it is If the Bishops have no Power but what they derive from the Crown, they can convey None but of the fame Sort to the Inferior Clergy.

I durst not have stood the Imputation of Calumny, in charging any of the present Clergy with Principles or Practices so directly in Desiance of these glaring and notorious Declarations of the whole Body, as well as their own repeated Oaths and Subscriptions, if I had not the Authority of the brightest Luminary of the present Church and Age (our Great

Great Metropolitan) to bear me out, who assures us in his Appeal, "That a new Sort of Disciplinarians are arisen up from amongst our selves, who seem to comply with the Government of the Church, much upon the same Account as Others do with That of the State; not out of Conscience to their Duty, or any Love they have for it; but because it is the Establish'd Church, and they cannot keep their Preferments without it: They hate our Constitution, and All who stand up in good Earnest for it; but for all that, they hold fast to it; and so go on to subscribe and rail."

To these wild and Enthusiastick Notions we owe the present Disassection; and most, if not all the Calamities and Publick Disturbances that have happen'd fince the Revolution; and yet (which is amazing to think of) they have prevailed so far amongst the corrupt Part of the Ecclesiasticks, that I wish we could find more even of the Low-Church Clergymen, who dare thoroughly to renounce these Impious and Anabaptistical Errors, as their

own Canons call them.

Dominion! Dominion is the loud Cry; which, as it has already produced all the Cruelties and Absurdities of Popery, so it is still teeming with, or bringing forth new Monsters; and what other Issue can be expected from so unnatural a Copulation as that of the Christian Priesthood with worldly

Power ?

To

To this we are beholden for all the Corruptions and Fopperies brought into Religious Worship, as well as the ill-shapen and ungainly Brats of Passive Obedience; the Divine Right of Kings and Bishops; the Uninterrupted Succession; the Priests Power of the Keys; of Binding and Loofing; remitting and retaining Sins; the Real Prefence in the Sacrament; the Altar, and Unbloody Sacrifice upon it; the giving the Holy Ghost; of Excommunication, as laid Claim to; and Confectation of Churches and Church-Yards; the Reconciliation of God's knowing what we shall do with a Power in us not to do it; of Persecution for Opinions, and the Tritheistical Charity; with a long Train of Monkish Fooleries befides: All, or any Part of which, could never have entered into the Heart of One Layman, or Clergyman either, if Nothing had been to be got by them.



NUMBER

all, but what flows had the Coolean of soleanery Se.VXs; R B B M U N rate hereofter demonstratively to make out; and I do-

ment, and the Clery can have no Power at

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Wednesday, April 27. 1720.

fy all the Redefiafficks in the World, audied

The Absurdity and Impossibility of Church-Power, as independent on the State.

Have shewn, in my last two Discourses, that the Clergy of England have no Jurisdiction, Power, or Authority whatsoever, which is not derived mediately or immediately from the Legislature, and that they have all sworn to this Principle: I now own my self so much concern'd for their Reputation, that I will even run the Hazard of incurring the Displeasure of some of them, by proving, that they have taken true Oaths, and that it is impossible to constitute a Protestant National Church upon any other Foundation.

I intend to shew, in the Course of these Papers, that there is not the least Colour or Pretence for the chimerical Distinction of Ecclesiastical and Civil, in any other Sense than

Chapters

as the Words Maritime and Military, are used to denote different Branches of the Executive Power: for, take away the legal Establishment, and the Clergy can have no Power at all, but what flows from the Consent of voluntary Societies; which I undertake hereafter demonstratively to make out; and I defy all the Ecclesiasticks in the World, united together, to take one Step towards proving the contrary, without plunging themselves in

everlasting Nonsense and Absurdity.

But to keep them a little in good Humour, I will suppose, for the present, that their wild Hypothesis is true; and that our Saviour, whilst upon Earth, (even against his own Declarations) had Ecclesiastical Jurisdi-Ction over the whole Earth; that he gave it to the Apostles; that they convey'd it on to their Successors; and that the Church of Rome, and the present Clergy of the Church of England, as by Law established, are their undoubted Successors: Nay, I will be so civil as not to ask one Question, what fort of Power that was? but take it for granted it was worldly Authority, and ought to be rewarded and supported by worldly Equipage, Wealth, and Titles; and if they have any Thing more to ask of me, I will grant that too, and then examine what Use can be made of these Concessions to the present Purpose.

of Archbishops, Diocesan Bishops, Deans, Chapters,

Chapters, Arch-deacons, the new Office of Deacons, Officials, Commissaries, the Two Houses of Convocation with co-ordinate Powers, Ecclesiastical Courts, Parish Priests, and Curates, with the whole Train of inferior Machines, and spiritual Under-strappers. Here I doubt all their Texts, all their Schemes will fail them; for very sew of these hard Names will be found even in their own Translations of the Bible, and they must have Recourse to Human Authority at last.

If they fay, (as I suspect they will) that the Government of the Church being conveyed down to the Bishops from the Apostles, they must have all Power which is necessary to it; and consequently have a Right to appoint Courts of Judicature, and Ecclesiastical Officers, as also to give them proper Powers

to answer the Ends of their Trust.

Episcopal Authority is given to every Bishop, independent of all the rest; to all the Bishops of the whole Church every where dispersed, agreeing together; to the Majority of this Whole; or to the Majority of any Number of them meeting in one Place, either by Confent, Accident, or the Appointment of Princes or States? For, I think, it must be agreed by all the World, that if the Bishops had any Power from God, which is Independent of the Civil Sovereign, he cannot restrain, model, or limit it; and that any accidental Alterations of the Bounds of Dominions, either

ther from Conquest, Chance or Consent, can no Way affect this Divine Authority, or hin-

der its Operation.

If every Bishop has this whole Power delegated to him from God; then by what Authority can the Exercise of it be afterwards restrained to a particular District or Diocese, so as to make his Actions out of it, not only invalid, but schismatical and criminal? Who can limit a Power given by the Almighty? Not the Civil Sovereign, who has nothing to do in another Jurisdiction; nor the Bishop himself, who must accept it upon the Terms God has given it.

for his own Sake, but as a Trust for the Benefit of Christianity; and it must be the highest Breach of this great Trust, not to discharge it personally, but to divide it with others, of whose Honesty he can have no

fufficient Knowledge. a virodan A lagodig!

Besides, when these Bishops differ with one another, (which will happen as often as they have different Complexions, Interests, or Understandings) what must the Christian World then do? Must they follow the Bishop of Barry, or the Abbot of Warry? Or suffeed their Christianity till they are all agreed? A solid Rock truly to build God's Church upon!

So great a Body of Men as the whole Christian Church, or the Majority of them, never did, or could meet together; and if such

fuch a Thing was possible, they would only Scold or Fight; and therefore any one may with great Modesty affirm, that no Ecclesiastical Establishment now in the World did, or could, take its Rise from such an Assembly.

Nothing therefore remains, but that, once upon a Time, a certain Number of Bishops met together, and settled such Constitutions, from which the rest are derived; otherwise we must setch them from the Civil Magistrate, or confess them all to be Usurpa-

dio, a Temporal Prince from any Pagnoit

Those who suppose the first, are obliged to tell us what Number are necessary to this Purpose; and if another equal Number should fettle a different Establishment in the same District or Province, who will be the Schifmaticks: I think it is agreed by all High-Churchmen, that every one of these can make as many other Bishops, and Goverhours of the whole Church, as he pleases; and therefore if one of them in a frolickfome Humour should create Two or Three Hundred of these Ecclesiastical Princes, are they all to have Votes in the Episcopal College? And I ask this Question the rather, because I my felf once knew a Drunken Popish Bishop in Ireland, who would have made these Spiritual Sovereigns from Morning to Night, for a Pot of Ale a Piece. The sentence around

or may not be faid by Persons of their Perfpicuity?)

fpicuity?) that the Power it felf comes from God, but the Exercise of it is to be limited and directed by the Civil Sovereign; I an-Iwer, that, besides the egregious Blunder of distinguishing between Power and the Exercife of Power, the first being only a Right to do certain Actions, in which the other confifts: this gives up the whole Question; for there can be no greater Power necessary to give an Authority than to take it away; and every Restriction and Limitation is taking it away in Part: No one can have a Right to. depose a Temporal Prince from any Part of his just Dominions, without having also the fame Right to deprive him of the whole; and in this Respect there can be no Difference between Temporal and Ecclesiastical Sovereignties.

of fanctifying Nonfense, they could not venture to tell us, that our Saviour has given Power to Bishops to execute Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction thro' the whole Earth; and confequently all Mankind must be their Spiritual Subjects: But that this great Power may here below be limited and restrained to Cities or Provinces, and parcelled out and divided in such a Manner, that some may have large Districts, others small ones, in which to one else must officiate; nay, that many more may have none at all, and yet every one have universal Jurisdiction, and be a

Bilhop of the whole Earth.

Thefe

These, with a huge Heap besides of glaring Absurdities and Contradictions, must be maintained by those, who would reconcile the divine Right of Bishops with any Protestand Establishment now in the World. have so amply shewn how inconsistent it is with our own, from the whole Tenor of our Laws and Canons, as well as the repeated Acknowledgments of the Clergy themselves; that I should think it not only needless but impertinent to fay any thing further of it. did we not daily hear of fuch Numbers of our Spiritual Guides, who rail against these Laws at the Time they fwear and fubscribe to them, and complain aloud of them as Violations of their own divine Rights, and denounce Judgments upon the Nation for fuch Usurpations.

Therefore in my next Paper I shall descant a little upon the voluntary and most applauded Actions of the highest, even of these High Gentlemen; and shew that they cannot help acknowledging the Principle I maintain, even in the Instances where they would oppose it, and amidst their greatest Demands for Power. This I intend to do, not with the least Expectation or vain Hope to induce them to alter their Measures, (there being a Prescription among the Ecclesiasticks against such Lay Follies,) but (if possible) to open the Eyes of their blind and stupid Adorers, and to let them see what wretched Idols they are

worshipping.

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NUMBER

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Hand tell bill ment now in the World.

Wednesday, May 4. 1720.

our Spinoual Guides, who sail against these

The Inconsistency of the Principles and Practices of High-Church; with some Advice to the Clergy.

Therefore in my next Paper I that de Cana F the Ecclefiafticks have any divine I Right, which is neither derived from the Civil Magistrate, nor the Consent of voluntary Societies, it must be vested in a single Person; in a certain Number of Perfons, which we all call Bishops: or in common to them all: The First is Popery, and the Last Presbytery. But I think there is no Establishment which now subsists. or ever did subsist in the World, which does or did affert the divine Right of Bishops, Independent of the Pope; and confequently it is the Proprium or peculiar Whimfy of our own perjured High-Churchmen, not only in Oppo-HERM WIN

Opposition to their Oaths and Subscriptions (as I have shewed already) but to the most applauded Actions of their greatest Champions; which it is the Business of this Paper to make out.

If there be a divine Right in the Bishops to Govern the Church, it is spiritual Rebellion, and the highest Sacrilege, to usurp upon this great Authority; but then, what will become of all the daily Daubing and fulfome Panegyrick upon the best established Church in the World? Since I think it is agreed by all the Clergy, that the Power of Legislation, as fat as they have any thing to do with it, is vested in the Convocation, which confilts of two Houses, one of Bishops, the other of Presbyters; a Constitution utterly inconsistent with this divine Right; which the High-Clergy have been to far from regretting or complaining of that it is one of their most effential Characteristicks, to maintain the Power of the Lower House against the Upper; that is, of Presbyters against their own Diocesans:

They claim a co-ordinate Power with them in the supremest Acts of Church Government; an Authority of acting by themselves, to choose their own time of meeting, to sit as often and as long as they please, to adjourn by their own Authority, to begin what Business they think sit, to choose their own Committees, excuse Absence, receive Proxies, judge of Elections, censure their own Members, and do all other Acts, which ought to be done by the sole Authority of a House which

which is it's own Master and Judge: All which. rhough they are rank Presbytery, yet are also become the genuine Principles of modern High-Churchmen; at the fame time that they affert a fole, divine, Apostolick, and independent Power in the Bishops to Govern the Chuch.

The afferting of these Rights of the Lower-House, is the Merit of their present Champion, Supplies the Wants of Charity in him, and covers a Thousand Faults; and 'tis much to be feared and lamented, that all the late Zeal of a much greater Man, and the present Services he is doing, will fcarcely atone for his having acted formerly upon Low-Church Principles, in defending the Prerogative of the Crown, and maintaining the Power of the Upper-House over the Lower.

What Persons or Party have supported the Bishops and their Authority, ever fince the Revolution, against their own Presbyters? All Low-Churchmen. Who were those who have been always afperling, calumniating and libelling the two last Arch-Bishops, our present Metropolitan, till very lately, the last Bishop of Salisbury, and indeed every worthy Prelate, but the High-Church Priests and their Followers? And who have honoured and defended their Persons and Characters, but Low-Churchmen ? Goddaot in shink your com

Who exhibited Articles against a present Bishop, for having impeached the King's Supremacy in Ecclesiastical Affairs, (wholly inconfiftent with the divine Right of Bishops) but the which

the High-Church Clergy? Who supported the late Dean of Carlise against his own Diocesan? All High-Churchmen. And who defended both these Bishops? All Low-Churchmen. Who burnt by the Hands of the common Hangman, a Book wrote by a Right Reverend Bishop, which asserted King William's Title upon the once genuine Principles of Conquest, and pass'd a scandalous and groundless Vote upon the late learned Bishop of Worcester, but High-Churchmen? And who voted for these Bishops? All Low-Churchmen.

Such open Blunders and glaring Inconfistencies must these Men be reduced to, who measure all Opinions by their present Interest and Passions; and who have no other Standard of Right and Wrong, but what most gratises their Ambition, Pride, Coverousness, or Re-

venge.

I can fafely fay, that, as I had no Interest in entring upon this Design, nor can have any in continuing it, but to promote the Cause of Virtue and Truth, and to support our present legal Establishment; by shewing the Laity that they are free, both by the Laws of God and their Country, from all the wild and enthusiastick Pretensions of the high-shown Ecclesiasticks: As I was willing also, not wholly to despair of being able to restore again the Apostate Clergymen to the Church of England, and to make them really of the Principles they swear to, pretend to monopolize, and yet constantly oppose;

fo I shall have the utmost Pleasure, if I can contribute to these great Ends, and shall rejoyce over such an Occasion, to drop this Paper.

As the High Clergy can have no other Motive to pursue these Principles, but the temporal Interest of their Order, in opposition to Christianity, and the apparent Laws of their Country; so I shall endeavour to convince them, that they are grasping at what they can never reach; and, with the Dog in the Fable, loosing a Substance to catch at a Shadow.

It was a Saying of the wise Lord Halifax, that Dr. Echard, in his Treatise of the Contempt of the Clergy, had omitted the chief Cause of it, namely, (not their Ignorance, but) the Knowledge of the Laity; and it is very true, that the Mists of Superstition and Fear, which have been so long raising before our Eyes, are pretty well dissipated and dispers'd; nor will an Horizontal Hat, a starch'd Band, and long Petticoats, pass in this Age for essential Marks of Wisdom and Virtue.

The Rehearfal has long fince told us, that the gravest of all Beasts is an Ass, and the gravest of all Birds is an Owl; and indeed the World seems generally of Opinion now, that sound Sense, polite Learning, good Breeding, and an easy and assable Conversation, are not only consistent with true Religion, but are most productive of it; and sure it cannot be denied, that the Laity, for the most part, exceed in these Qualities. They

They are refolv'd, at last, to see with their own Eyes, hear with their own Ears, and feel with their own Hands: Ipfe dixit will pass no longer. It is a ridiculous Attempt to endeavour to deceive any one, who will not confent to be hood-wink'd: A Jade will not be put into an Horse-Mill, till she is blinded; nor could Sampson be led about and about by the Philistines, till they had pur out his Eyes; therefore I would give my old Friends a Hint, tho' I doubt to little Purpose, namely, to change the Course of their Sailing, according to the shifting of the Winds and the Tides, and not run the Danger of Shipwreck upon those Coasts, where their Predecessors formerly found deep Water and fafe Riding. 29 Molan

I am sensible, many of the High Church Popis Clergy will laugh in their Sleeves at this Advice, and think there is Folly enough yet left among the Laity, to support their Authority; and will hug themselves, and rejoyce over the Ignorance of the Universities, the Stupidity of the drunken Squires, the Pannick of the tender Sex, and the never to be shaken Constancy of the Mobility; but I would put them in Mind, that all these since Visions have once already mislead and deceived them, and therefore may again.

Idefire they will count their Gains, and recollect what Addition of Power they got, or were like to have got, by the late great Revolution of temporal Politicks, which they were so instru-

mental

mental to bring about; Indeed they were call'd together, and had a Liberty given them to fcold and quarrel with one another; but they were not suffered to hurt so much as a Mouse; and even Mr. Whiston laugh'd at them. Whilft their Patrons were making their Court to France and the Pretender, for Preferments; the Lower-House of Convocation was very usefully employ'd and diverted, in compiling Forms of Prayer for confecrating Church-Yards, and for Criminals who were to be hang'd; which, 'tis faid, a certain Great Person then call'd, Throwing out a

Barrel to the Whale.

I am afraid, they are not well informed of what it much concerns them to know, namely, that even the Tories themselves will not be Priest-ridden; and that those amongst them, who have any Sense, laugh at High-Church Principles in private, tho' they Bow to the Broachers of them, and feem to admire them in publick; of the Truth of which I my felf have been frequently a Witness: So that of whatever Importance they may feem to themselves, they are, in Troth, but the Tools and Cats-Feet to the worst of Men; are only employ'd to do their Drudgery, and run down their Game; and will scarce have for their Pains even the picking of the Bones, when (like Jackals) they have hunted down the Lyon's Prey.

I should not have thought my felf at Liberty to have unburthen'd my Mind thus freely,

freely, if it had not been to have ferved some of my Friends among these High-Church Clergy, by helping them to a little of that Understanding, which is not to be learn'd in Universities, and in Conversation with one another; and I wish, (tho' I cannot hope, much less perswade my self to believe) that when they have duly confider'd what I have faid, they will change their Style, and endeavour to atone for all the Mischiefs they have hitherto done, by being hereafter Advocates for Civil and Ecclefiastical Liberty; will make use of the Influence they have over the poor deluded Mobility, to promote true Religion, as well as Peace and Happiness, amongst Mankind; and be no longer the Boutefeus or Incendiaries of every popular Faction and Tumult. Which God, of his infinite Mercy, grant, &c.



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my Friends among these High Chare

Wednesday, May 11. 1720.

Hotel of the Civil and Fredericks

Reasons why the High-Church Priests are the most Wicked of all Men.

T feems natural and reasonable to suppose, that Clergymen, who have a learned, ingenuous, and Christian Education; who are bred up in strict Difcipline; who in their Youth study the Works of PLATO, ARISTOTLE, CICERO, and other Heathen Moralists; as also the Books of the Old and New Testament, which they believe to be divinely inspired; who attend daily Prayers, and frequent Sacraments; who pretend to have a Call from the Holy Ghost, to teach the World; who spend a great Part of their Time in composing divine Discourses or Sermons, who are obliged to Pray and Converse daily with Weak, Sick, and ferupulous Parishioners, about heavenly Matters; who, by Conversation and close Union

Union with one another at Visitations, and other holy Meetings, and (I prefume) by Prayers together, have great Opportunities of improving themselves in Vertue and Godliness; and who are under a particular Obligation to fet good Examples, and under a fort of Necessity to observe some Decorum; should be better, than other Men. Bur yet. it is a Matter of common Observation, that they are not fo; almost all in the Roman Church, and too many in other Churches, being notoriously guilty in an eminent Degree of those Vices, which are of most pernicious or most extensive ill Consequences, and most Anti-Christian; such as Ambition, Pride, Anger, Hatred, Malice, Revenge, Litigiousness, Uncharitableness, Hypocrify, Perfecution, Sedition, Treason, Equivocation, and Perjury; (whereof Multitudes of the Law ity are not only wholly innocent, but remarkable for the Virtues opposite to them?) to fay nothing of their equal Guilt with other Men in respect to the inferior Vices of Swearing, Drunkenness, and fuch like. And this Fact is honeftly confess'd by the late Bishop of Sarum, who in his Memoirs (which we expect foon to fee publish'd, with the utmost Impatience) tells us, that he always believes well of Laymen, till he fees Caufe to change his Mind; tho, as to Churchmen, it is otherwife with him; for he has feen fo much amifs in that Profession, that he is inclin'd always to think ill of them, till he fees Cause to think otherwise. Where-

Whereupon, it is a frequent Subject of Inquiry, how it comes to pass, or what are the Causes of this Fact, which would never be credited if it was not very manifest. Some are at a Lofs about this Matter; but, for my Part, I am not. And the Fact is no more furprizing to me, than are other common Facts concerning Men; which, by being common, must have plain and manifest Caufes. The Causes of this Fact, in particular, are fo plain to me, that from the mere Confideration of them, I should wonder if I found the Clergy better than they are; and I esteem those Causes to be so necessarily productive of their Effect, that I do not think it Prefumption to pretend to know the Doings of the High Clergy in all Ages to have been wicked, even without History or Testimony, which are requifite to give us the Knowledge of other Mens Crimes. GROTIUS's Observation, * qui legit historiam Ecclesiasticam, quid legit misi vitia Episcoporum? must be true, and juffly apply'd to all other Clergy as well as the Christian.

It is not the Defign of this Paper, to affign the general Caufes of this Fact, or all the particular Caufes, which render so many of our Clergy so bad as they are. That Subject I reserve for a Treatise by it self. I shall at present only assign some of those Causes, which I conceive to have the most

^{*} Ecclefiastical History, nothing else but a Detail of she Villanies of Priests.

direct Influence on the Morals of fo many of

our Clergy.

Youth is the great Opportunity of Life, which fettleth and fixeth most Men either in a good or bad Course; and the Impressions. especially bad Impressions, then made, are usually lasting. Youth is also a Time of Innocence, when Men have Horror for Vice, which they never commit at first without offering Violence to themselves. The first and most natural Thoughts of Man are to be Honest, and Just, and Reasonable, as the best Things he can do for his own Sake; and it is the Influence of ill Example, and of the common Practice of the World, which, for the most Part, changes his Sentiments, and puts him upon ill Actions. But the natural Innocence of Youth being once broke in upon, Man by Degrees grows harden'd and impudent in Wickedness, and commits it without Shame or Remorfe.

Nothing therefore has so direct a Tendency to debauch the World, as to debauch the Youth: And the earlier, the more effectual; for thereby Innocence and Vertue may be so effac'd, as in a little Time to leave no Memory or Trace of them, no more than QUARTILLA in PETRONIUS ARBITER had, who, tho' a young Woman, did not remember that she had ever been

a Maid.

Now, it seems to me peculiar to the Clergy, in most Parts of Christendom, to begin the

the World with the greatest Breach upon the natural Honesty and Integrity of Youth, and with the greatest Violence upon their own Consciences, that can be imagin'd; as will be evident from the following Particulars.

i. First, the Youth who are fent to Universities, are early initiated into Perjury, by being obliged to take College Oaths, in some respects impertment or ridiculous, in others wicked, or impossible to be kept, by which Means, False Swearing becomes familiar to them, and they esteem Oaths only as Matters of Form, and their Breach to be but common Qualifications for Preferment.

2. Secondly, When they go into Holy Orders, they profess, that they are inwardly mov'd by the Holy Ghost to take upon them their Office: tho nothing is more notorious, than that many are inwardly mov'd by the Profpect of Power and Wealth, and by Neceffity of a Maintenance; and that many use all the Arts and Means, to no Purpofe, to procure to themselves Law and Physick Fellowships in Colleges, and other Lay-Preferments, (where no Engagements contrary to their Judgments and Consciences are requifite) in Order to avoid the Burden of going into Orders: And by Confequence, that they feel no inward Motions of the Holy Ghoft; unless he can be suppos'd constantly to concur just as ferves the Purposes of Men engag'd in the Pursuit of their Temporal Interests. Here then is a solemn Lye and Profe titution

do not feel themselves mov'd by the Holy Ghost.

3. Thirdly, Many of the Clergy Abroad fubscribe Articles of Religion, which they do not believe. Mr. WHISTON (Effays, &c. p. 237.) fays, he believes there is scarce one Clergyman, even of our reformed Church. that has consider'd and examin'd Things with any Care, who believes all the 39 Articles in their proper and original Meaning. This implies, that the Unbelievers, among the Clergy, of the Articles, are very numerous; unless it be suppos'd, that few of the Clergy consider and examine Things with any Care. But the Thing is manifest from the Sophistry and Knavery used by many of them to palliate their Subscription to the Articles; which imply, that they do not believe those Articles. (1.) Some pretend to subscribe them as Articles, which, tho' in Part erroneous, they oblige themselves not to contradict. (2.) Some pretend to subscribe them in any Sense, wherein they can understand them according to the Rules of Grammar. (3.) Some pretend to subscribe them in any Sense, wherein they can reconcile them to Scripture. (4.) And others chuse the Sense, they pretend to subscribe them in, out of the feveral Senses they suppose intended to be held forth by the same Articles. And I wish more of them pretended to subscribe them honestly and fairly, viz. in the Sense really. menflo.

really intended by the Imposers, who, to prevent Diversity of Opinions, impose their own Sense, as agreeable to Scripture; and therefore cannot be supposed to have intended, that the Articles should differ from all other Writings, which all Readers endeavour to understand in the one Meaning intended by the Authors. Nay, to subscribe the Articles without believing them, is so reputable among the High-Church Priess, that a fair Subscriber, that is, one who subscribes in the one Sense he supposes originally intended, passes amongs them for the worst of Men, viz. a Presbyterian, and an Enemy to the Church.

4. Fourthly, Every Clergyman instituted into any Benefice, fwears, That he has made no simoniacal Payment, Contract or Promise, directly or indirectly, by himself, or by any other, to his Knowledge, or with his Confent, to any Person or Persons what soever, for or concerning the procuring and obtaining of his Ecclesiastical Dignity, Place, Preferment, Office or Living, (respectively and particularly naming the fame whereunto he is to be admitted, instituted, collated, installd, or confirm'd) nor will at any Time hereafter perform or satisfy any such kind of Payment, Contract or Promise, made by any other, without his Knowledge or Confent: So help him God, thro FESUS CHRIST. Now, whether any of them break this Oath, I leave to the Consideration of the Reader, who ought to esteem

esteem all Clergymen taking it guilty, that either make Presents to any Body, or Marry, or compound with the Patron about Tythes, in order to get the Benefice; no less than those who, by Bargain, pay Money before or after the Benefice is procurd, are guilty.

5. Fifthly, An Oath of Allegiance to his Majesty King GEORGE is taken by all Benefic'd Clergymen; who may be justly deem'd perjur'd, if they do not pay the same Regard to his Majesty, which they pretend to have been due to King CHARLES the First, or Second; or to Queen ANNE, at the Beginning and latter End of her Reign. The Popularity and Credit, to which this Perjury intitles the High-Church Clergy among one another, and the Difgrace attending those who are faithful to the Oaths they have taken, (the former being dubb'd by them Honest Men, and good Churchmen, for breaking their Oaths; and the latter Rogues and Betrayers of the Church, for keeping them;) leaves us no Room to doubt, that the Perjured of this Kind are but too numerous. However, I am willing to think it would be Injustice to fay, that many Laymen need not go out of their own Parishes, to find one at least, and often more, where there are Le-Gurers and Curates.

The Difficulty therefore mention'd in the Beginning of this Paper, admits of a plain Solution; and it is as easy to conceive,

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that Men, who begin the World in this Manner, should exceed others in Wickedness; who either begin the World innocently, or are under no Necessity to begin it wickedly; as it is to conceive, that Butchers and Soldiers should be less Humane than others, or that young Women, once prostituted, should lose all Modesty.

NUMBER XVIII.

The Popularity and Credit, to waich this

to have been due to King CHARLES

deem'd peggird, if they do not pay the fame

Wednesday, May 18. 1710.

A general Idea of Priestcrast.

BOOKE

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Have, in my Eighth and other Papers, vindicated the Almighty from the Imputation of Obscurity in revealing his Will to Mankind; and shewn, that he is plain, exact, and even circumstantial, when he delivers his Precepts to them. I shall now expose the contrary Proceedings of weak and corrupt Men; by giving a general Idea of the principal Arts, by which the designing Priests of all Religions

ons have kept their Craft and Impostures from a Discovery, and made the Truth, as

far as they could, inaccessible.

Every mad Action, or Principle, in Religion and Government, must have some appearing Cause assign'd for it, proper to make the People stare, and to hide the true one. Mankind, as tame as Priefts and Tyrants have made them, will not be content to be deceiv'd or butcher'd, without having a Reafon for it. The Pope, who assumes a Power to judge for all Men, and devotes whole Nations to Damnation and Massacre, and fends People to Heaven of Hell in Colonies, just as their Money or Disobedience determines him, acts a very confiftent Part in tying the Keys of both Worlds to his Girdle, and in stilling himself God's absolute Viear General. These are his Reasons; and the Catholick and more Orthodox Parts of Europe are well content with them.

English Clergy thought fit to tye us Hand and Foot, and deliver us over to our Kings, as their proper Goods and Chattels, to be fed or flay'd according to their sacred Will and Pleasure, they rold us, it was the Ordinance of God, that one Man might glut his Lust, or his Cruelty, with the Destruction of Millions, and if we kept out of Harm's Way, we were assuredly damned. And These were their Reasons then. Of late, it is true, many of them have changed their Doctrine

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and their Behaviour. We are, it seems, at present, living in the Guilt of Rebellion, which is a damnable Sin; and so we are to rebel upon Pain of Damnation, to free our selves from the Damnation which sollows Rebellion. These are their Reasons now.

Formerly, when some certain Persons were content to be Protestants, the Church of Rome was the Spiritual Babylon, and the Scarlet Whore, and Sodom; and the Pope was Anti-Christ; for he fate in the Temple of God, and exalted himfelf above all that is called God. But this was Truth, and could not hold long, confidering into whose Hands it was fallen; and therefore in a little Time, when they had a Mind to get into the Pope's Place, and to do and fay as he did, the Church of Rome became all of a fudden a true Church, and an old Church, and our Mother Church. In fhort, the old withered Harlot and Mother of Whoredoms grew a great Beauty, and her Daughter here in Eng. land refembled her Mamma more and more every Day she lived, and gave the foregoing Reasons for it. 11 of 'spinoson by vall so

From hence it is plain, that tho' for every Imposture some Cause must be assigned, yet a very indifferent one will serve the Turn. The Gross of the World are dull and credulous: Few make any Enquiries at all, and sewer make successful ones. It is, however, still best if the Cheat stands upon such a Foun-

Poundation, that it cannot be fearched nor

examined by any Human Eye.

When Numa Pompilius told the Romans, that he converfed familiarly with the Nymphi Egeria; which of them could pay her a Visit, and ask her whether the Prince and she were in Earnest such very good Neighbours? And when Mahomet took fuch a wide Range thro' the other World, upon his Nag Elborach, and told Wonders at his Return; there was neither Man nor Horse in all Arabia, that could take the same Journey to disprove him: Or, when he was pleased to be thought conversant with the Angel Gabriel, I do not hear that ever the Angel figned a Certificate that they were no wife acquainted. The Quack, who had found out the true Ferni Seed and the Green Dragon, thought it, no doubt, a hard Matter to prove him a Lyarin Minda Canonico O none

In the Heathen Temples of old, neither the Sybils, nor any other Priests or Belchers of Prophesy, Male or Female, were answerable for the Oracles and dark Sayings they utter'd. They had what they said from God, who never once contradicted them. It was impossible to come at him for personal Information; and a very profane Crime not to believe his Priest; and to distrust the Deity himself, was almost as bad: You had nothing to do but to captivate your Reason to your Faith, and swallow the Verbum Sacerdotis. If you did not, the Judgment of the God, that

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that is, the Anger of his Priest was sure to

purfue you.

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The fame Policy has been ever practis'd by the Deluders of Mankind in all Names and Shapes. They have always entrench'd themselves behind the Ramparts of Mystery, Uncertainties and Terrors. The Romish Clergy maintain all their Pretentions and Power by Doctrines, which are calculated to make the People either wonder or tremble. And when a Man has loft his Courage and his Understanding, you may easily cheat or terrify him into as tractable an Animal as the Creation affords. The Doctrines of Purgatory, and of the Priests Power to forgive or damn, are alone strong enough to frighten most Folks into what Liberality and Submisfion the Church thinks fit to demand of them. And we all know that the is not overmodest upon such Occasions. Bring me all thou halt, and follow me, is her Stile.

I with I could keep these Impostures and wild Claims altogether out of England, and confine them to Popish and Infidel Countries only. But that which is obvious and avowed cannot be hid. Very many of our High Jacobite Clergy aim at Dominion by the fame wicked Means, and hood-wink and alarm us all they can. They lead us out of the Road of Reason, and play their Engines in the Dark; and all the Illumination we can get from them is, that we are all in a Mift. Without their Guidance we go aftray, and

and with it we go blindfold. All their Arguments are fetched from their own Authority. Their Assertions are no less than Rules and Laws to us; and where they lead we must follow, tho' into Darkness and Servitude. If we grow wilful, and break loose from our Orthodox Ignorance, we are pursued with hard Names and Curses. Doubting is Insidelity, and Reason is Atheism. What can we do in this Case? There is no Medium between a Blockhead and a Schifmatick; if we follow them blindly, we are the First; and the Second, if we leave them. We want Faith, if we will not take their Word;

and we want Eyes, if we'do.

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They indeed give a Sugar-Plumb, and refer us to the Bible for Proof of all that they fay. But, in Truth, this Privilege, if we examine it, will appear None at all; but, on the contrary, an errant Bite, and gross Mockery. For when they have fent us to a Text, will they allow us to construe it our own Way ? No fuch Matter: They have nailed a Meaning to it, and will permit it to bear no other. You may read, provided you read with their Spectacles; and examine their Propolitions freely, provided you take them every one for granted. You may exert your Reason fully, but be sure let it be to no Purpose; and use your Understanding independently, under their absolute Direction and Controul. I wonder how these Men could ever have the Front to accuse the modelled Church

Church of Rome for locking up the Bible in

an unknown Tongue!

The eternal War that they wage against Reason, which they use just as they do Scripture, is founded upon good Policy; but it is pleasant to observe their Manner of attacking it. They reason against Reason, use Reason against the Use of Reason, and shew, from very good Reason, that Reason is good for nothing. When they think it on their own Side, then they apply all its Aids to convince or confound those who dare to think without their Concurrence: Therefore, in their Controversies about Religion, they frequently appeal to Reason; but we must not accept the Appeal, for if our Reason be not their Reason, it is no Reason. They use it, or the Appearance of it, against all Men; but no Man must use it against them. As there is no fuch Thing as arguing and perswading without the Assistance of Reason, it is a little absurd, if not ungrateful, in these Gentlemen, to decry it at the same Time that they are employing it; to turn the Batteries of Reafon against Reason, and make it felf destroy

Neither Scripture, therefore, nor Reafon, by these Rules signifies any Thing till the Priests have explain'd them, and made them signify something; and the Word of God is not the Word of God, till they have declared its Sense, and made it so. Thus, by the Time that Scripture and Reason have been modelled,

modelled, and qualified, and cooked up by the High-Church Jacobite Clergy, they are neither Scripture nor Reason; but a perfect French Dish, or what the Spiritual Cooks please; an Oleo or Hodg-Podge of Non-

fense, Jargon and Authority.

From all that has been faid, the following Conclusions may be drawn: Such Clergymen as I have been above describing, prove every Thing by afferting it, and make any Pretence fupport any Claim. They build Systems upon pretended Facts, and argue from Propolitions which are either highly improbable, or certainly false. When they cannot convince, they confound us; and when they cannot perswade, they terrify. We have but Two Ways to try the Truth of their Doctrines, and the Validity of their Demands, namely, Reason and Revelation; and they deprive us of Both, by making the One dark, and the Other dangerous: o bgs . doigile !!

What a Contempt must this Tribe have for Mankind! I my was some ods bore took and

the great Difficulty and Question is, by what

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INCE there are fo many diffe-

rent Opinions and Apprehensions in the World about Matters of Religion, and every Sect and Party does with fo much Confidence pretend, that they, and they only, are in the Truth; the great Difficulty and Question is, by what Means Men may be secured from dangerous Errors and Mistakes in Religion? For this End some have thought it necessary, that there should be an Infallible Church, in the Communion whereof every Man may be fecured from the Dangers of a wrong Belief: And others have thought it necessary, that their several fallible Churches should have Authority in Matters of Faith, in order to keep

up a right Faith in the People of the Funda-

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But it feems God has not thought either necessary: If he had, he would have revealed himself more plainly in this Matter, than in any particular Point of Faith whatfoever. He would have told us expresly and in the plainest Words, that he had appointed an Infallible Guide and Judge in Matters of Religion, or Men who should have Authority in Matters of Faith; and would likewise have plainly mark'd out him or them, for Men to have had Recourse to on all Occasions; because our Belief depending on this infallible Judge, or on these Men who had Authority, we could not be fafe from Mistake in particular Points, without fo plain and clear a Revelation of this infallible Judge, or of these Men who had Authority, that there could be no Mistake about him or them; nor could there be an End of any other Controversies in Religion, unless this Matter of an infallible Judge, or of Men who had Authority, were out of our Controversy. Van 1011 .

It is not pretended by any Advocates of Infallibility or Authority, that God has delivered the Matter expressy and plainly in the Scriptures. They proceed, and build only on Inferences and Deductions from thence: And the Papists are divided among themselves as to the Seat and Extent of Infallibility; as the Protestant-Papists are, in respect to the Seat and Extent of Authority. And both

both Infallibility and Authority are manifestly abfurd Pretences in Point of Reason; tho' Infallibility feems less abfurd than Authority. The Pretence of Infallibility is plainly abfurd: because the Infallible Church gives constant and daily Proofs of its Fallibility: And the Pretence of Authority is abfurd; because, that may lead Men into any Mistakes whatfoever. Bur, as I observed, Infallibility is less absurd; because that is of a Piece, and confistent with, and necessarily follows from Authority: Whereas Authority without Infallibility, supposes a Power given Men by God to lead the World into any Mistakes, and to Subvert Christianity it felf. But however this be, they are both sufficiently ridiculous; and it is ridiculous to fend Men, in order to their Salvation, to believe either in the Pope, or Dr. Swift, or Dr. Burgess, on whose Authority, if Men depend, they can only be Papifts, or Swiftites, or Burgesites, and not Christians.

If then God has not provided an infallible Judge, nor any Men with Authority in Matters of Religion; there is some other Way, whereby Men may be secured against all dangerous Errors and Mistakes in Religion, and whereby they may discern all such Truths as are necessary to their Salvation. Now that way our Saviour has declared to us in these Words, If any Man desire to do his Will, he shall know of the Doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of my self: that is, if

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a Man has an honest and sincere Mind, and a hearty Desire to do the Will of God, he has the best Preservative against dangerous Mistakes in Matters of Religion; and God, or his Understanding, will enable him to distinguish sufficiently, whether Doctrines be of God or Men, and will conduct him

into all necessary Truths.

This is a true and plain Answer to the Question proposed; and also true and plain Religion, or Christianity, if Men will be govern'd by CHRIST, the Author and Fimisher thereof. This is easy to be known, and requires little Time to learn. This frees Men from all Concern about the intricate and endless Squabbles of Divines, disputing which of them are to have Authority, and wherein their own Authority consists; and ought to set them at Ease; for, as Christians, or Followers of CHRIST, they have nothing to do to enquire, what Priests are to have an Anti-christian Authority over one another and the Laity.

But notwithstanding the Plainness of the Case, it is no Wonder, that weak People now a Days should believe in Priests and not in Christ; should be Priestlings and not Christians; when, in our Blessed Saviour's own Time, the Jews were ready to believe in any Impostors, and averse to believing in him, as he himself tells us. I am come, says he, in my Father's Name, and ye receive me not; if Another shall come in his own Name,

him

bim ye will receive; how can you believe, which receive Honour one of another? That is, (to make a fort of Application to our prefent Times) " you have the Bible among you, "wherein I teach you in my Father's Name, wherein I bid you fearch, examine, and try all Things for your felves, and to call " no Man Master in Religion upon Earth: "That Bible you reject, in not understand-" ing it for your selves; but if any Man " fet up for an Authoritative Interpreter of " it, him you will receive for your Master, " and call your felves after his Name. How " can you be Believers in, and Followers " of me, who believe upon the Authority " of Men, and reject the Authority of " Gods while even of or mont

Christianity, or Religion, thus truly understood, has too many Enemies to make it lost Labour to prove it true by Arguments. And therefore I observe, in Proof of our Saviour's Doctrine, That a hearty Defire and Endeavour to do the Will of God, is the best Preservative against dangerous Mistakes; First, that therein our Saviour recommends the best and most proper Disposition of Mind to qualify a Man to receive Truths from God, and to enable him to make a right Judgment as to what proceeds from God, and what from Men. For a good Man is most likely to have right Apprehensions of God and Divine Things. Secondly, fuch a Disposition in a Man supposes his Impartiality

tiality in the Search of Truth; that he has no Partiality to any particular Doctrine; and that he is superior to the Temptations of any Passions, (which blind the Mind) and has no Reason to deceive himself by receiving Things without Evidence; nor Inclination to reject what has Evidence. Thirdly, God will not fuffer the best dispos'd Minds to fall into dangerous Mistakes; but will, as he fays himself, guide them in Judgment, and shew them his Way. Again, God fays by SOLOMON, If thou incline thine Ear unto Wisdom, and apply thy Heart to Understanding; yea, if thou cryest after Knowledge, and liftest up thy Voice for Understanding, if thou seekest her as Silver, and searchest for her as for hid Treasure; then shalt thou understand the Fear of the Lord, and find the Knowledge of God. Indeed, the Bible is fo plain, as to all necessary Truths, that he that runs may read; and a Day-Labourer cannot fail of finding Truth, that fearches it there; and is in no Danger of failing, unless he delivers himself up absolutely to some Guide to interpret the Bible for him. Fourthly, and Laftly, living honestly, and feeking after Truth, are the best Things a Man can do, and the very Perfection of his Nature; and by Consequence all that God, who is a good and reasonable Being, can require of him.

I shall conclude this Paper, which I have written in Behalf of Christianity, and against Antichristianism, with another Divine Say-

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ing of our Bleffed Saviour: He that speaketh of himself, seeks his own Glory; but he that feeks his Gory that fent him, the same is true. and no Unrighteousness is in him. As if he had faid, " Hereby you may distinguish One "that comes from God from an Impostor, " If any Man feeks his own Glory and Au-" thority, you may conclude, God has not " fent him; but, whatever he pretends, that " he speaks of himself, preaches himself, and from himself; but he that seeks the Honour " of God, and not his own Interest, Advan-" tage and Authority, by directing Men to the "Authority of God alone, that Man has no " Falshood, no Design to deceive; you may " conclude him to be no Deceiver or Impo-" ftor."



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S between the feveral Acts of the A most grave and solemn Tragedies, it is allowed to divert the Company with a Dance or a Song; so in this Paper, I shall descend to entertain my Readers with a Differtation upon Chaplains, who are a Sort of expensive Domesticks, which none but great Families can entertain. How or when this venerable Piece of Household-Stuff became first in Use, is not certainly determined, that I know of; but it is certain, that he is left entirely out of the Roll of Ecclefiastical Officers mentioned in the New Testament: his Use and Importance being not thought of, or forgot to be mentioned by St. Paul, though not by Mr. Collier, who has supplied the Omission of the Apostle, and discovered them.

counting

It is likely that Chaplains were first invented and brought into Fashion, in the dark and barbarous Ages; and so Custom has continued what Ignorance began. To these Days of Darkness is owing the marvellous Encrease of lazy Monks and cheating Friers; in which black Swarm of Reverend Idlers, probably, first crept in this Supernumerary Levite. It is well known, that worthless and designing Priests have always advanced and nourished Superstition, being very sensible that it would in return nourish and multiply them. Thus Priestcrast and Bigotry beget each other; and being so near a Kin, perpetually maintain the mutual Relation.

The Office of a Chaplain is, according to Mr. Collier, to Pray for, Blefs, and give Absolution to those he is concerned for — "All "which, fays he, are Acts of Authority and "Jurisdiction." If this last Assertion be true, it is enough to destroy all Charity; since at this rate of Reasoning, I ought to be asraid of throwing a Farthing to an Almi-woman, lest she would be thereby provoked to Pray for and Bless me, and by that Means acquire Jurisdiction over me. And who would not rather deny his Charity, than give away

his Liberty?

To shew that Mr. Collier is very much in earnest in bestowing this same Authority upon this his Domestick Parson, he puts a Rod in his Hand against the Master of the Family himself, whom, it seems, it is his Right to counsel,

counsel, exhort and reprove; which Offices, he says, are "inconsistent with the Condition "of a Servant." The Chaplain therefore is in the first Place a much Wiser Man, as well as a more Holy, than my Lord is; and in the second Place, it is his Duty to owe my Lord no Duty at all in the Capacity of a Servant to

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After he has put the Clergy in " joint Com-" mission with the Angels themselves," as he fays God has done, it is no Wonder that he will not allow the meanest of them to be any Man's Servant, how great foever. He therefore reasons against the 13th of Henry VIII. because it calls the Patrons of Chaplains their Masters. If some of them "formerly " were Stewards and Clerks of the Kitchen " to People of Distinction," as he fays Bishop Latimer complains some of them were forced to be in his Time; I cannot see for all that how they could, according to Mr. Collier, fuffer by it in their Dignity and Reputations; because, for as good Reasons as before, their gathering the Rent and going to Market for Provision, might give them furifdiction over the Person who employed them. I cannot there'fore join with some of the Criticks in censurring the Author of the Scornful Lady, for difpatching Parson Roger in a Morning, with his Basker under his Arm, to fcour the Roofts and gather Eggs; the fame being a primitive Branch of his Office, if we may believe the aforesaid Bishop. But Before

But though " People misapprehending the Priest's Office, entertain a Chaplain upon " the same Account they do their Footmen, " only to garnish the Table and stuff out the " Figure of the Family"; (Collier's Esfays, " part 1. p. 204, 205.) yet " for a Patron to " account fuch a Confecrated Person his Prieft, " as if he belonged to him as a Servant, is, " in effect, to challenge divine Honours, and " to fet himself up for a God, (p. 207.) Mr. Leflie puts the same Thing stronger, in fewer Words, and will not fuffer any Man (Prince or Subject) to fay, my Parson, or my Chaplain, in any other Sense than we say, my King or my God, warter Parties about of

So that, in the Sentiments of these Reverend Gentlemen, every one who hires a Chaplain, hires a Master. Take Warning then, O ye rich Men, Nobles, and Princes of the Earth; and due Submission and Allegiance pay unto these your Spiritual Sovereigns, whom you have taken into your Service to be your Superiors; and to whom you give Bread and Wages to exercise DOMINION over you.

After all, Mr. Collier is fo good as to allow " the Master of the Family, in the Ab-" fence of the Prieft, to fupply his Place, as " far as lawfully be may, that is, in Praying friand giving Thanks at Meat," (p. 200.) But he must not Pray to God to Bless his Family, and to forgive them their Sins; for this would be to Usury the Authority of his Lord, the Chaplain. aforefaid Billion. Buff

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Before I have done with Mr. Collier, I would ask him one Question, and that is, Whether the Chaplains of Bishops are of the fame fuperior Importance and Authority with the Chaplains of Laymen; because the Bithops themselves are qualified to be their own Chaplains; if the laying of Domestick Prayers, and Bleffing their own Table, is allowed by him to be consistent with their Ecclesiastical Dignity?

Milton, though otherwise a Man of great Parts and Merit, yet wanting either the Senfe or the Grace to fee the Usefulness and Excellency of these adopted Sovereigns, speaks of them with too much Contempt. He fays, that "in State perhaps they may be listed " among the upper ferving Men of some " great Houshold, and be admitted to some " fuch Place as may stile them the Sewers or "the Yeomen Ushers of Devotion, where the " Master is too resty, or too rich, to say his

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" own Prayers, or to Bless his own Table." " (Vol. 2: of his Works in Folio, p. 509.) But this was the Cafe only in his Time, for a Chaplain now a Days is looked upon as a

more honourable Piece of Furniture. After a Coach and Six, the next Trappings of Domestick Grandeur, are a Page, Plate, and a Parson. He swells the Houshold Pomp and Luxury, and is often taken for Pride more than Prayers: Formerly, his Appetite was uncourteoutly restrained; he was only per-

mitted to Riot in Roaft Beef; and Sir Scrape

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and the first Course were removed together. But now he has better Luck, having, for the most part, obtained a general Toleration for Custard.

Nor are the Times mended with Mr. Chaplain in one Instance only: In Days of Yore he was humbly content with Abigail, and my Lady's Woman was thought a fuitable Match for the Houshold Priest, (as Mr. Collier Christens him) but now he does not make that use of her, but leaves her, and flies at higher Game. If my Lady is fingle, the Doctor has a Chance for making his Fortune; and when he cannot marry her, he can fome times fell her: of which I could give Instances, but for the regard which I bear to the Quality and the Priesthood. If my Lady be already married, he has still Happiness and good Fortune in his Eye, provided the be but Young; and even though she is Old, provided she be Superflitious and Bigotted : So that whether her Person is agreeable, or her Understanding crazy, he has his Ends; for he has a Parfort's Barn, and nothing comes amis. Weins all

It must be owned farther, that a Chaplain in a Great Family is a useful Body for most Purposes, except that of his Function: He is often a facetious Person, and his Jokes and Puns keep the upper Part of the Family in a good Mood; for, as to the Inserior, he deigns not to speak to them, unless to insult them, and thereby teach them the great Respect which they owe him. He moreover graciously condescends

descends to pry into all the Actions and Behaviour of the Servants, by which he keeps them in Obedience and Fear, at least of himfelf.

. Scire volunt secreta domûs atque inde timeri.

Besides, he is so courteous, that he meddles with all Family Assairs, unasked; and interposes with his Counsel and Authority, unthanked. From hence it comes, that he and the Steward can never agree: For the Steward (like a sawcy Layman, as he is) will be pretending to know his own Business as well as Mr. Chaplain, who is a Consecrated Person. The Family is therefore eternally divided into Two Factions between them; but the Doctor has the Secret of securing the Women on his Side, and so always gets the Better.

The Doctor is likewise a considerable Person for divers other Arts and Accomplishments.
He throws a Bowl with more Skill, and sollows it with more Activity, than any Man (not
in Orders) upon the Green. He is also a
trusty Toper in the Family: He has an uncommon Palate in the Discernment of Liquors, and an uncommon Zeal for their Consumption. Nor is his great Dexterity at
Whisk of trivial Moment: His Talent in this
Branch of his Duty is so signal, that my Lady
seldoms fails chusing, or rather requiring him
for her own Partner, if he is not already
snapped up by the Daughter for her's.

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After all this, who can wonder that our Houshold Priest holds up his Head, and adores himself? He is an hourly Witness of his own Importance and Figure; and finding himfelf. an extraordinary Body, it is nothing strange that he demands extraordinary Treatment. As little to be admired is the Erectness of his Mien, and the dignified Primness of his Manner; how else should he be himself, and differ from all other Men? His Authority and the Custom of the Cloth give him a Right to Contradiction; and if he loves State and pompam aulicam, what Layman does not? If he hates to fee a Brother peeping through Timber, or wrigling in a String, who can blame the Workings of Self-love? If the German Princes are under his Displeasure for facrilegiously admitting their Pages to fay Grace; fo are all they who make bold to cut their own Corns, under the Frowns of that famous Artist Don Saltero of Chelsea.

To conclude with a grave Paragraph; I am afraid it too often happens, that this fame Housbold Priest, who is taken into a Family to Sanctify it, proves a Disturber of its Repose, and a Foe to its Welfare. He is a Spy upon the Wealthy and the Great, for the ill Ends of his Order. If he has the Ear of his Patron, he can, by alarming his Conscience, or stroaking his Vanity, influence him to turn the Patrimony of his Children into a Gift to the Altar; and so a Family of Innocents are straitned, or ruined, to enlarge the Pride and

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Income of a worthless Vicar, ot to rear up a graceless Mob, for the Interest and Support of Priestcrast and Slavery. So that the Publick it self suffers in no small Degree from the Malignant Insluence which designing Chaplains have in Great Houses. How many Noble Families are by them inslamed with an unsocial Bitterness of Spirit against all those, who inossensively think for themselves; and are tainted with the vile Principles of Vassalage to any Authority, Civil or Sacred, which these their Spiritual Governors shall plead for?

P.S. This Paper being intended to expose the ridiculous Privileges claimed in Behalf of Chaplains, as if they were of Divine Institution; and the ill Use they make of their Influence over weak Minds: Nothing here faid is meant against any Gentleman's taking into his Family a pious and agreeable Clergyman, under the Title of a Chaplain; who, if he possesses an honest and beneficent Heart, with Affability and good Breeding, is, no doubt, an amiable Character. But as to those little, four, unbred Bigots, whom I have frequently feen in that Station, I do not think they ought to be admitted into the Conversation of Gentlemen, or fuffered to have any Concern either with their Children or Servants To that Fed they and bird and

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paid a great Revenue, which by the Means

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A Comparison between the High Church and the Quakers.

are Spiritual Officers appointed by Order of the Civil Magistrate (like Church-Wardens, Overseers of the Poor, Constables, and other Parish Officers) to act according to his Law, which is their Rule, and which has interpreted the Bible for them in the Thirty-Nine Articles, Homilies, Liturgy, Canons, Injunctions, and other Institutions. The chief Design of their Appointment is to instruct Men in Religion and Morality, or to make Men wiser and better than they would be without their Assistance. To that End they are hird, and paid a great Revenue, which, by the Means of Lands, Tythes, Rents, Salaries, Fees, and Per-

Perquifites, is fuppos'd to amount to Two Millions per Annum; wherein they greatly differ from the aforefaid Parish-Officers, who perform many real Services to Society without any particular Reward, as is, in many Cases, the certain Duty; which Men of the fame Society owe to one another. But as making Men wife and good are the very best Things which can be done for them, both in Relation to their Condition in this World and the next: So every Man ought to think this Revenue well bestow'd, if Men are made more wife and good in any Proportion to the Charge; and on the other fide ill bestow'd, if Men are not in the least improv'd in Knowledge and Virtue; much more, if they are render'd more ignorant and worse by the Teaching and Influence of their Guides.

We are justly concern'd how we part with our Money in other Cases, how it is laid out and managed, and whether what we receive in Lieu of it be worth our Money, especially when the Sum is considerable. It is therefore of great Importance to us to confider the State of this Affair, wherein so much is expended; that, in Case the Clergy do not answer the Ends of their Calling, and not deserve their Revenues, we may take proper Measures to make them do fo; for it is in the Power of us of the Laity, who almost wholly chuse and constitute the Legislature, to make the Clergy useful, and it is either thro' our Ignorance, or Knavery, or Both, if we do not make them useful. Now

Now it feems to me, that the Toleration or Liberty of Conscience granted by Law in England, gives us an Opportunity of examining this Matter, beyond what can be done in Popish or other Countries, where no such Toleration is allow'd. We have a numerous Sect, or People among us, distinguish'd by the Name of Quakers, who have no Spiritual Officers, with any Wages, Hire, or Salary, whose peculiar Business it is to Teach; but every Man among them does freely of himfelf, and gratis, communicate his Knowledge, both publickly and privately, according to his Ability, whenever he judges it proper so to do: And therefore we may eafily make a Comparison in the Case, between the Wisdom and Virtue of the common People of the National Church, and the Wisdom and Virtue of the Quakers, (who have no Quality or Gentry among them, but confift of Tradesmen, Artificers, Farmers, Servants, and Labourers) and thereby make a just Judgment, whether the Two Millions per Annum are well or ill bestow'd.

born with the same natural Parts as the Churchmen. It will also be manifest, that they improve their natural Parts by the Knowledge of what the Clergy esteem the most important and sublime Points of Religion, under their general, diffus'd, unbir'd Ministry; equally at least with the Members of the Church, under the Direction of their Clergy, bir'd for Wages; for by free Conversation with both

both Sorts, you will find that the Quakers understand as well the Nature and Attributes of God, the Doctrines of the Trinity in Unity, the Satisfaction, the Incarnation of God, and other such Points, and express themselves as clearly about them as Churchmen; and I presume this Matter will appear so clear as not to admit of the least doubt. I do confess, the Quakers have some Errors, (for what Man is or can be free from Error?) But as to those Errors, I think two Things may be offer'd in Excuse of them.

First, I observe in general with the most ingenious and Reverend Mr. No RRis, (in his Two Treatifes of Divine Light. 2d Tract, p. 32.) who fays, that he cannot think Quakerism inconsiderable, as the Principles of it are laid down and manag'd by Mr. BARCLAY. That great and general Contempt they lie under, does not hinder him from thinking the Sect of the Quakers to be far the most considerable of any that divide from the Church, in Cafe the Quakerism that is generally held be the same with that which Mr. BARCLAY has deliver'd to the World for such; whom he takes to be so great a Man, that he professes freely that be had rather engage against an Hundred BELLARMINS, HARDINGS, and STA-PLETONS, than with One BARCLAY,

Secondly, I observe, that the Quakers seem very excusable in respect to several of the Errors wherewith they are charged; and that their Neighbours, if they would do as they desire to be done unto, may justly pardon them.

them. For as to their Opinions about Tythes, and paying Wages to Clergy, (which are deem'd fundamental Errors, and judged by the Clergy in their Books against the Quakers to be a fort of Atheism) they have it to fay in their Excuse, that Tythes, which were a Part of the ritual Law of the Jews, are as fuch abolish'd under the Gospel, which has repeal'd the whole ritual Law. It feems alfo strange to them, that Ambassadors, (as the Clergy pretend to be) or Negociators, should claim Money from those to whom they are fent; that it appears more strange that the Clergy, who pretend to be Succeffors in Ambassadorship to Christ and his Apostles, should claim Tythes or Money, and thereby suppose our Blessed Saviour himself and his Apostles to have begun that Claim: Therefore they alledge, that if the Clergy are only voluntary Ambassadors or Negociators, they ought to bear their own Charges; and if only Minifters or Servants, they should be paid their Wages by those who bire them, and not claim an independent Maintenance; and herein they pretend to follow the Primitive Christians, who (according to the Reverend and Learned Dr. REEVES, in his Apologies, &c. Vol. 1. p. 44.) would not pay Taxes for the Maintenance of the Heathen Temples: And indeed, there is no Colour to make Tythes due Jure Divino, that Point being fully determined on the Side of the Quakers, by that accomplish'd Scholar and Divine, Dr. Pris deaux,

deaux, in his Original and Right of Tythes; and besides, it is a Matter of Contest among the Clergy, to which fort of them an independent Maintenance does by Divine Right

belong.

As to the Quakers Doctrines of Paffive Obedience, or taking patiently all manner of Affronts and Injuries, and refusing to bear Arms on any Occasion; it is known, that herein they follow St. JUSTIN MARTYR, ORI-GEN, TERTULLIAN, St. CYPRIAN, LAC-TANTIUS, St. BASIL, SALVIAN, and others the most Learned and Ancient of the Primitive Fathers.

And as to their Principle of not Swearing at all, they follow the Fathers of the Five First Centuries, who (according to the most Learned Dr. WHITBY, in Differt. de Script. Interp. p. 164.) all agreed, that Oaths of all Kinds were Unlawful to Christians; those Fathers understanding our Saviour's Words, Swear not at all, univerfally; which, indeed, feem fuited to the Notion, as they were the very Language, of the Essenes, a Sect of Jews in our Samour's Time, who maintain'd all Oaths to be Unlawful.

It will be difficult to find one Quaker that cannot read, unless he has been educated and bred up in the Church, and became a Convert to Quakerism. Whereas, I will venture to affirm, that Half the Common People of the Church, especially in the Country, can-

not read a Word.

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The Quakers are great Readers of the Bible; and it is their Principle to endeavour to make the Best of that Divine Book, which, tho' containing infinite Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge, yet, as it is a perfect Rule of Faith to the whole World, is a plain and most intelligible Book, and must naturally improve the Quakers, more than it does those Churchmen, who either cannot read, or do not read the Bible at all, or not fo much as the Quakers; or that think they are not to make the Best of their Bibles without any Restraint. I dare to be so unfashionable as to affert, that the Bible may, and will, improve the Readers thereof; notwithstanding Dr. South fays of a Part of that Holy Book, that it either finds Men mad or makes them fo; and that Dr. REEVES. in Derogation of its Divine Precepts, thinks fit to suppose, that Quakers, by reading the Bible, become fark Bible-mad. (Preface to Apologies, &c. p. 11.) saibat first and area is

But there is one Point wherein the Quakers greatly exceed the Churchmen in Understanding, and whereof the Meanest among them is firmly perswaded; and that is, that Every Man is to judge for himself in Matters of Religion. Whereas sew Churchmen are clear, as Men, Christians, and Protestants, ought to be, in this Matter; which is the Foundation of all good Sense, Christianity, and our glorious Reformation from the Wash Priesterast, Poper Y. This Principle naturally produces Knowledge: For the Use of the Understand-

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ing improves the Faculty; as delivering up the Understanding to Priests or Guides, sinks and debases it. And accordingly the Quakers reason and act very nicely in their Affairs, as a Politick Body, in Relation to Marriage, Orphans, Care of their Poor, &c. and Particulars among them understand Trade, and the Business of the World, and how to live in it, as

well as any Men whatfoever.

2. As to the Comparison, which are the Best Men, Quakers or Churchmen; I suppose, it will not be deny'd, but that the Quakers are as good Men; as good in their Families; as good Neighbours; as Quiet, Temperate, Chaste, Sober, Free from Passion, Industrious; as clear from the gross Crimes which fill the Goals, and expose Men to the Pillory and Hanging; as Charitable in their Sentiments to those who differ from them; as great Enemies to Persecution; as true to Liberty and Property as any Churchmen; and, in fine, as good Subjects, and as Loyal to King GEORGE, (tho' Loyalty be the diffinguishing Principle and Glory of our Church,) as any professed Follower of Dr. SACHEVE-REL, LUKE MILBOURNE, or other fwearing loyal Divine.

Since, therefore, it is undeniably evident, that the Quakers are at least as wife and as good, without any Charge to the Publick, as Churchmen are with it; I conceive it is incumbent on every One, who does not envy the Clergy their Preferments, to endeavour

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to find out some other Way to make them as useful as possible to Mankind, and to put them upon such an Establishment as may enable them to deserve all their Power and Riches; which shall be the Subject of some future Papers.

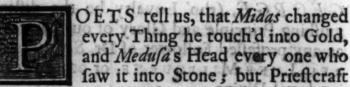
DUMBER XXII.

as good Neighbours as Onice, It emperate,

Wednesday, June 15. 1720.

Priestcrast corrupts every thing, and perverts the Use of Words.

to those who differ from them; as great fine



is yet of a more mischievous Nature, for That converts all who come within its Influence into Idiots or Lunaticks; and every Vertue or good Quality of the Mind into Nonsense or Roguery.

Every Creature and Plant affimilate the Food or Nourishment they receive into their own

own Substance: The Toad converts into Poyfon the same Juices, of which the Bee makes Honey: The same Breath blown into different Instruments, makes good or harsh Musick; it is no wonder therefore if that which is all Corruption it self, should corrupt and spoil every Thing else which touches or comes near it.

It has so mangled and perverted the Signification of Words, and the Nature of Things, that Language is rendered useless, or rather a Snare to Mankind: There is scarce a Sound or an Action, which has received the Stamp of a general Approbation, that has not lost its Meaning; and is stript of all Honesty to become Orthodox, and be made free of the sacred Society, as the Popish Priests are pleased to call themselves.

A becoming Zeal for the Glory of God, which ought to be a fervent Disposition of Mind to promote Holiness and Virtue almongst Men, by Sostness, Perswasion, and Example, is now nothing but Party Rage, an implacable and furious Hatred, and the Denunciation of Woe and mortal War against all, who do not believe just the same with us, and cut their Corns as we do: Moderation is become a Vice, and esteemed to be Lukewarmeness, and an Indifference to Religion and Goodness.

An obstinate Bent of Mind, and a determinate Resolution to adhere to Opinions, the Truth of which we have never examined,

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never intend to examine, and for the most part, are not able to understand if we did, is what is call'd Constancy in the Faith; and to burn our felves, or to fight with our best Friends till we can burn them, passes for He-

roick and Christian Courage.

We must shut our the Sun at Noon in a Summer's Day, to make use of Candle-Light; and give up all our Senses to submit to frail Authority. We are to believe every Thing in exact Proportion as we cannot understand it, or as it appears abfurd; and allow that alone to be true Faith, which contradicts the first Principles of Science. Reafon, which is the only Light God has given to Men, to distinguish Truth from Falshood. Virtue from Vice, Religion from Imposture, is decried; and the Use of it deemed impious and dangerous. To less animosed A

Perfecution of our Fellow-Creatures, Fellow-Subjects and Fellow-Christians, for doing the best Action they are capable of doing, (which is worshipping God in the Mannet they think to be most acceptable to him) is called ferving the Almighty, and promoting his Religion. The ruining and destroying our Neighbours, (whom we are commanded to love as our felves) and cutting their Throats, is having Pity upon their poor Souls; and the acting against all the Dictates of Nature. and Precepts of the Gospel, is Christianity,

and doing the Will of our Saviour.

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Enthusiasts, fanatical, melancholly, monkish, recluse and sequestred Persons, are esteemed the Religious; and are supposed to know the other World, in Proportion as they know little of this. Philosophers, and Men of Wit or sound Knowledge, are generally accused of Insidelity and Atheism: Nay, the cardinal Virtues themselves cannot escape; but without the Belief of certain fashionable Speculations, are accounted only splendida Peccata, and those who posses them are treated with Ignominy; and indeed, none are thought sit for Heaven by Gentlemen of this Cast, but such as no Man of common Sense would care to keep Company with upon Earth.

Celibacy is esteemed a Virtue in some Churches, and not discouraged in others; and the disobeying the great Dictates of Nature, and the positive Command of God, to encrease and multiply, is miscalled Chastity; and the wasting our Time in running up and down from Church to Chappel, from Chappel to Church, to hear Masses, and idle Harangues, and being persectly useless to Society, and good for no one Thing in the World, is called by the Popish Priests Devotion and Godliness; as if the Almighty could be any way served but by doing good to his Crea-

tures.

Poorness and Dejection of Mind, is called Meekness of Spirit; and a Readiness to submit to Injuries and Impositions, is Christian Humility; stifling our Senses, is Submission M 2 and

and Deference to Authority; and our best Searches, and most sincere Enquiries after Truth, are called the Desires of Novelty, and curious and forbidden Studies: The doubting of any Thing, which our Guides think it their Interest to tell us, or shewing the Weakness of their Arguments, is Scepticism, and renouncing the Faith; and a hearty Concern for the Honour of Almighty God, and the Good of Men, is often interpreted to be downright Atheism; and to communicate with our Christian Brethren, when we can do it with a good Conscience, is Hypocrify; unless we do it too when we think it finful.

An Attempt to oblige the Clergy to keep the Laws they have sworn to, and the Articles they have subscribed, is to oppose received Opinions, and quieta movere. An Endeavour to preserve our Legal Constitution, is Sedition, Faction, and being given to change; and a generous Love for all Mankind, and the Liberty of our Country, with a noble Resolution to venture Life, and all which is valuable here below for that glorious Cause, is Rebellion, and worse than the Sin of Witchcraft.

Wasting, macerating, and torturing our Bodies by Fasting and Penances, is sanctifying our Souls; and to reject and throw back the Benevolence and bountiful Gifts of indulgent Providence, is to shew and pay our grateful Acknowledgments to his Goodness; as if he gave us any Thing, not to use and enjoy

enjoy it; but we were to accept these Blessings only in Trust for the Clergy, and so live poorly our selves, that they may riot in Luxury, Profuseness and Pride: which they have seldom fail'd to do, when they have had the Means of doing it; carnal Things being observ'd best to suit with spiritual Minds.

Playing Monkey Tricks at Church, passes amongst the Papists for the Worship of God; and they go to ghostly Dancing Masters, to know how to accost Him fashionably: The failing in a Ceremony, the Omission of a Bow; the not filing to the Right or Lest readily, or not adjusting their Motions to the Tune and Time of the Organs; are all dangerous Errors, and savour much of Heresy; and the worshipping God in Spirit and in Truth only, is Disobedience to the Church, and little better, if not worse, than Atheism; The decking up, and dressing of Churches, and giving the Deity sine Cloaths, is Decency, and doing him Honour.

Appropriation of Places, Persons, or inanimate Things, to be used only in the immediate Service of God, (and which may be so applied indifferently with any Ceremony, or with none at all) is turn'd by the Romish Priests into a fort of Incantation or spiritual Jugling: By virtue of a little Holy Water, looking towards the East, mumbling over a few cunning Words, certain Motions of the Hand and Head, and by the help of some M 3 Powder

Powder le Pimp, the faid Places, Persons and Things become facred, and the Holiness is transferred from the Minds of the Communicants to the Ground, the Wainfcoat, and the Carcass and Cloaths of the Priest; and fo the Devotion due to Almighty God, is chang'd into a fenfeless Idolatry to as senseless Men and Idols.

Prayers are turn'd by them into Curfes, and Sermons into Invectives and Libels: Benevolence and good Will towards Men, and even Charity it felf, which is comprehensive of all the Vertues, and without which Faith and Hope fignify nothing, and which is not confin'd to Perfons, Nations, or Languages, to Sects nor Opinions, but ought to be as free as the Elements, and diffusive as the animal Creation, is chang'd into Faction, Partiality, and often Profuseness, to support a Party, and a Combination against all Mankind, who do not think and act as we do.

But no Parts of Speech have had fo ill Fortune, as Scripture Language, and even amongst some Protestants: Appellatives, and the Names of Complex Ideas, are often left untranslated, that they may pass for real Beings, and fignify whatever the Priests have Occasion for; and sometimes, where they have been translated, false or unfair Meanings have been affigned to them, and they have been made to convey a quite different Sense from what they import in Scripture: The Word Ecclesia or Assembly is translated Church, TOD WO

which

which there always signifies the Christian People, and in our Articles, is defined to be the Congregation of the Faithful, but is now generally us'd only for the Clergy; and the Word Episcopos (which in English is Overseer) is english'd Bishop; so that Women, and the ignorant Crowd, are fully satisfy'd that they have found in Scripture, a Lord of Parliament, and a Diocesan Prelate, with a Mitre upon his Head, and a Crosser in his Hand; and whenever they hear or read the Word Presbyter, they fancy they see a Parson beating his Cushion in a Pulpit, and believe him to be Jure Divino: Instances of this kind are endless.

Even Literature it self is perverted, and instead of being made to improve Mens natural Faculties, is used to extinguish or stifle the first Principles of Knowledge. Seminaries have been erected and endow'd to teach Men backward: The Youth at a very great Expence, learn to be Blockheads, and accomplish'd Dunces; and spend the first and most improvable Part of their Manhood to be finished in Folly. The Discovery of Printing, which brought about the Reformation, is used to destroy it; and, like the Scotchman's Monkey, is made to bite every one but him who has the sole Custody of the Machine.

Of all or most of these Heads, I shall treat separately, in order to undeceive Mankind, and to manumit them from the Frauds and M 4 Tyranny

Tyranny of Popish and popishly affected Clergymen; by shewing, that they now do, and ever did, make Use of all their Instuence over the stupid and unhappy Laity, and of all the Power and Riches they have been ever trusted with, to drive Religion and Virtue from the Face of the Earth, and therefore have always endeavoured to turn the worst Things into the best, and the best into the worst.

One Drop of Priestcrast is enough to

contaminate the Ocean. 32 Your your yolk od on and avoided has a fulpic, and brising

Number XXIII.

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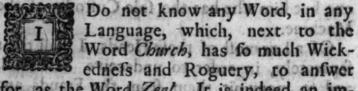
Divino! Inflances of this kind are

of being made to improve Mens us-

Wednesday, June 22. 1720.

be finished in Folly. The Dicorder

Printing, which brought about the Reformation, is used at Act S if and, like the Scarchman's Monkey, is made to hire every



for, as the Word Zeal. It is indeed an important

portant and dreadful Monofyllable, which, when used with proper Gestures and Emphasis, can turn a Cut-Throat into a Saint, and a Mad-man into a Martyr. It can commit Bloodshed and Butchery, with innocent Hands; destroy Life and Property, with a good Conscience; and dispeople Nations with

Applause.

True Zeal is a fincere and warm Concern for the Glory of God, and the Spiritual Welfare of Mankind. This Definition seems to me to take in every Idea which ought to be annexed to the Word Zeal; and shews it to be a Vertue full of Affection, Meekness, Humanity and Benevolence, and void of all Choller, Bitterness, Ill-will, and Severity. This is its Character; and whatever contradicts it,

is not Zeal, but Rage.

Especial Care ought therefore to be taken, effectually to distinguish true Zeal from false, and the Thing from the Pretence of it. For, if it is not well grounded, it falls under the Apostle's Censure, of a Zeal, which is not according to Knowledge. Of the latter Sort, is that with which crafty Men infatuate the credulous Multitude, who take their Religion upon Trust, and their Faith and Zeal at fecond Hand. Their Godliness consists in Prejudices and a Set of Names. They hate Diffenters, because they do not come to Church, and because they are strict Observers of the Lord's-Day, and feek God without Book: And they are zealous for the Church; but if you

you ask them what they mean by it, you will find it to be either the Organs, the Ring of Bells, or the Parson. They have a zealous Antipathy to a black Cloak, which is a certain Sign of a wrong Religion; and they have a doating Fondness for a black Gown. which is an infallible Mark of the true Church: They therefore abhor and infult the former, and honour and bow down to the latter. Which Temper and Behaviour in them are wonderful Demonstrations of the Spirit of the Gospel; and entitle them to the highest Favour and Approbation of their Spiritual Governours. At the Time when Dr. Sacheverel was fuffering the Law for Sedition, I asked one of his Mob, who was stragling at some Distance from the rest, in Lincoln's-Inn-Fields (as they were proceeding to demolish Daniel Burges's Meeting-House) what provok'd him to so much Outrage against Daniel, and his Congregation? He answer'd; Because they had murther'd King Charles the First. I then asked him, What he knew concerning King Charles the First? Why, quoth he, He was One of the Twelve Apostles; and Dr. Sacheverel is the best Friend he has in the World. Here he swore a great Oath, and left me to pity the Ignorance and Phrenzy of the enchanted Crowd.

Zeal, and Craft its Father: And as its Pedigree is vile, fo is its Behaviour brutal and abominable: It is the Tool of Knavery and Design,

Design, and operates by Folly, Wickedness and Force: It is a Mastiff uncoupled, and halloo'd at Conscience, Sobriety, and Peace: and fer on to devour every good Quality, it felf possessing none: It is rouzed by Lies, and animated by Liquor: It combates Truth with Curfes, and Moderation with Blows. Its Courage is Madness, and it is bold thro' Blindness. It has never any Mercy upon others, and feldom upon it felf. It takes the Word of its Driver; and mistakes Mischief for Merit, and his Word for God's. It is the most miserable of all Slaves; it is blind. and it is diffracted; and its only Freedom is to act Outrages, and shed Blood. It is neither bleffed with Enjoyment nor Rest. It boils with Anger; it burns with Envy; it is tortured with Hatred; it is worried by all the worst Passions. It is incapable of Happiness; and either deaf to Instruction, or undone by it; for the Moment it grows wifer, it dies. for monte.

How often do Ambition and Design work their own impious Ends, under the snug Disguise of fanctify'd Zeal! Men are never weary of being deluded with Sounds; and a pious Word, artfully prostituted, and devoutly pronounced, will at any Time lure them into the grossest Impostures, and push them on to commit the most inhuman Barbarities. Thus the Papists are first taught that the Pope is a Vice-God, and the Representative of Jesus Christ; and that his Zeal for his own

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Revenues and Dominions, is Zeal for Christ and his Church: and then it is an easy Matter to perswade these poor Slaves and Bubbles, to adopt such a Portion of the same Zeal, as will prompt them to poison, and murder, and plunder, and burn, all those unhappy Schismaticks, who continue fo, rather than abandon their Senses, their Humanity, their Charity, and the Fear of God; all which are de-Aructive of the Character of a Zealot. And thus both Papilts and Protestants, being perswaded by their Priests, that all who, either thro' Reason, or Grace, think differently from the faid Priefts, are in a State of Damnation; become further perswaded, that because they are to be damned, therefore they are to be undone; and so anticipate the Labour of the Devils, and add Misery to the miserable. By this Means, as Satan is the Almighty's Executioner, they make themselves Satan's; and such Zeal is at once the Instrument and Qualification of a Damon.

When I see a grave Doctor proudly urging upon his Hearers the Divine Right of Episcopacy, which is just of as much Importance to Mankind as the Divine Right of Geography; I see presently into the Heart of the Man, and would lay any Wager that he has a burning Zeal to succeed St. Peter, in the Divine Revenue and Lordship of some Human Diocese; or else courts some Bishop with great Zeal for his Lordship's Neice, or for a fat Benesice, And I cannot but own,

that

that a Christian Zeal for a Thousand Pound a Year, or even for Two Hundred Pound a Year, or even for a rich Wife, gifted with a good Apostolick Fortune, is a very commendable and very prevailing fort of Zeal; but I cannot fee that it equally affects the whole Congregation. Pray of what Moment is it to a harmless, well meaning Flock of Sheep, whether their Shepherd is called Pastor or Overfeer? Or, whether he has Twenty Pound a Year Wages, or Twenty times as much? Or, whether he is hir'd by the whole Village, or only by the Chief Man of the Village? Or, whether he wears a plain Hat, or a high Crown'd Cap? Or, whether he wears Linnen or Woollen? But it is of great Moment to them, whether he feeds them or starves them; or whether he defends or planders them; or whether he utterly neglects them himself, or only leaves them to the Care and Command of his Dog; or whether he feeks their Safety and Happiness, or only their Flesh and their Fleeces.

But further; the Tempers of Men, being either naturally warm, or quickly made so, it is easy to mistake a hot Head for a devout Heart, and an angry Heart for a devout Zeal. But, alas, how different is the meek Spirit of the Gospel, from that Fury which is rais'd by strong Beer, or passionate Sermons! How little do Men consider, that the same Arteries do often beat with equal Vigour for a Punk as for the Church, and occasion

broken

broken Heads for the one as foon as for the other!

God Almighty, and comes attended with every other Christian Virtue, and subdues every unruly Passion. It is inseparable from Charity, the highest Christian Grace, and the chief Characteristick of a Christian; that Charity, which wisheth all Things, hopeth all Things; which forgives all Men, but hurts none. It neither burns nor imprisons Mens Bodies; nor plunders their Goods, nor rails at their Persons, nor stirs up Mischief against them, nor marks them out for Damnation. It is not raised by cruel Language, nor encreased by Bottles of Brandy; it is modest, it is merciful, it is temperate, it is discerning.

On the other Hand, there is not in the World a more cruel, debauch'd, or more ignorant Passion, than false Zeal: It is void of Pity, of Grace, of Knowledge, and of Charity; it is outragious; it delights in Blood; it commits Massacres, and murthers Innocents; it dispeoples Nations: Nothing can restrain it, neither Kindred nor good Qualities, nor Pity nor Tears: It usurps the Name of Religion, and destroys all Religion; it commits Abomination in a Style of Devotion, and talks Blasphemy in the Name of the Lord. It proftitutes God's Authority to destroy God's Works; and, in the Name of Christ, damns and destroys those whom Christ died to fave. The rot as and

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If People would but look a little into their own Hearts and Constitutions, they would too often find that their Zeal is only Anger. and that this hot Devotion refides altogether in the Blood. I have long observed that your Cholerick Fellows are your most zealous Fellows, and are always the warmest Churchmen; and that, amongst the Ladies, the most amorous are ever the greatest Bigots. He who is peevish at his Table, will be peewith in his Pulpit; and as highly offended at an ill Dinner, as at a Conventicle. I once caught a great fat Doctor at St. Paul's, curfing and storming against Presbyterians, whom he configned in a Body over to Satan, with great Zeal, and no Remorfe. Says I, to my felf, This reverend ill-tongu'd Parson will certainly quarrel, and kick, over his Claret as well as over his Cushion: In order to try, I got into his Company at the Baptist's-Head, and by the Humility of my Behaviour, and the Divinity of the Hermitage, I fat at tolerable Ease with the Doctor, till the middle of the third Bottle, and then he fwore at the Drawer for not answering before he was call'd; and, before it was out, he drank Confusion to Fanaticks, and a Health to Sorrel. The Doctor then shew'd a violent Appetite for Quarrelling; but meeting no Body in the fame Humour, he only eafed himself in Oaths; till an honest Citizen drank to him the Glorious Memory of King William; which the Doctor pledged, by throwing a wild

wild Duck, just hot from the Spir, full in the Citizen's Face, and got up at the same Time to fall upon him with his Hands; but as foon as he got up he fell, and we lest him upon the Floor, to the Care of the Drawers.

How long are Mankind to be deluded with Sounds; and how long will Uncharitableness and Outrage, which are Enemies to the Nature of Christianity, pass for Zeal for Religion! Are Men to be curs'd, or punish'd, or destroy'd, out of Zeal for the Gospel, by which all Severity is forbid? Where are we commanded to quarrel for the Peace of the Church? or to run mad for the Reasonableness of Liturgies? or to sight for the Divine Original of Human Forms? or to deliver Men to the Devil, for the saving of their Souls?

How unlike is our Modern Zeal to that of the Apostles, and how unworthy to be call'd by that Name! They liv'd under Hardships and Stripes, and ventur'd their Lives to convert Unbelievers: Our present Zealots live at Ease and in Plenty; and their Zeal is devoutly employ'd about Tythes, Honours, Garments, and Forms. They do not pretend to venture their Livings and their Lives to convert either Pagan, or Papist, or Mahos metan. The Idolatry and Insidelity under which the miserable World lies, do not seem to interrupt their Quiet and their Enjoyments. But if a Dozen harmless Christians presume

God without Book; or to commemorate Christ's Death with Praises and Prayers, such as a devout Heart dictates; or to refuse complying with a Rote of Words, which they judge neither edifying nor warrantable; or to follow their Consciences, which alone can justify them in the Sight of God; and not the Authority of Men, which cannot justify them in the Sight of God: they are allarm'd, and their Church totters if Conscience is protected.

If this be the Spirit of Christianity, I must own my felf to have been hitherto a Stranger to Christianity; and yet these Men go on to tell us, that they are the only true Church, tho' they possess not one Grain of that Charity which distinguishes a Christian from a Reprobate, as much as a Rational Soul does a Man from a Monkey; and to damn all other Churches, that is, the whole World, without taking one Step towards bringing them into a State of Salvation.



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Wednesday, June 29. 1720.

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If this be the Spirit of Christianity, I must

HERE are but two Ways of propagating Religion, namely, Miracles and Exhortation. The one depends upon divine Power, and the other upon the Strength of Reason. Where the Finger of God appears, all further Testimony is needless; and where the Truth is obvious to Reason, Miracles are needless. God never wills us to believe that which is above our Reason, but he at the same Time commands our Faith by Miracles. He does not leave necessary Things doubtful; and for this Reason alone it is, that Men are said to be left without Excuse.

Every Point of Belief therefore must be supported either by Reason or Miracle, or else it is no Point of Belief at all. Both the Jewish and the Christian Law were delivered and en-

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forced

forced with manifest Signs and Demonstrations of God's extraordinary Presence and Power. And it has been very justly boasted of the Christian Religion in particular, that it spread and prospered by Miracles, Persuasion, and Clemency, in Opposition to Vio-

lence and Cruelty.

But when Christianity became tainted and defaced by Priestcraft, it grew necessary to have many Points believed, which contradicted both Revelation and common Sense: Therefore its Foster Fathers, who to the Worship of God, added the Worship of themselves, had no other Way to prove their System but by Wrath and Vengeance. Reason was against them, and Miracles not for them: So their whole Dominion stood upon Falshood, guarded by Force. This Force, when it is exercised upon a religious Account, is called Persecution; which is what I am now to consider and expose.

To punish Men for Opinions that are even plainly False and Absurd, is barbarous and unreasonable. We possess different Minds as we do different Bodies; and the same Proposition carries not the same Evidence to every Man alike, no more than the same Object appears equally clear to every Eye. A cholerick Temper, when it is not corrected with Reason, and seasoned with Humanity, is naturally Zealous. A phlegmatick Temper, on the other side, as it is naturally slow, so is it lukewarm and indifferent. Is there any

Merit in having a warm Complexion, or any

Sin in being dull anthrouses

But further; to punish a Man for not feeing the Truth, or for not embracing it, is in the first place, to make him miserable, because he is already fo; and in the fecond Place, to pluck Vengeance out of God's Hands, to whom alone it belongs, if we will take his own Word for it. If this Severity is pretend ed to be for his Good, I would ask, Is manifest Cruelty any Token of Kindness, or was it ever taken for fuch? Does it not always encrease the Evil which it is employed to cure? Is Destruction the Means to Happinels? Abfurd and terrible! Wyd 300 ff

But what, if, after all, the Person persecuted should be found an Adherent to Truth and Honesty, and his Enemies should prove their Enemies? Would not this be adding Cruelty to Falshood, and heaping up Guilt with both Hands? This indeed is often the Cafe. And where it is not altogether fo, the Persecutors are still inexcusable. He who, in the Search of Truth, does all he can, does as much as he ought. God requires no more, and what Man dares do it, who fears him? When he acquits, who is it that condemns?

Besides, he that suffers, or at least dies, for Religion, gives a Testimony by so doing, that his Conscience is dearer to him than Ease or Interest! Whereas the Patrons of Perseeurion have manifestly personal Motives and self Ends in it. It gratifies their Pride, Meric

awes

awes Mankind, and brings them Obedience and Gain.

Our bleffed Sayiour, who had no View but the Redemption of the World, never used his Omnipotence, or the least Force, to subdue his Enemies, though he knew their Hearts to be malicions and implacable. He neither delivered them to Death nor the Devil, even for their hellish Designs to kill him; much less for Points of Error or Speculation. He reasoned with all Men, but punished none. He used Arguments, he worked Wonders; but Severities he neither practifed, nor recommended. His was a different Spirit. He rebuked his Apostles with Sharpness, when, being yet full of the Spirit of this World, and void of the Spirit of God, they were for bringing down Fire from Heaven upon the Heretical Samaritans. The merciful Jesus would not hurt these half Heathens, though they rejected him in Person; for he came not to destroy Mens Lives, but to fave them: And they who take another Method, give the Lye to the Lord of Life, and difown him for their Head. damner in ele-

His Apostles, as soon as they had received the Holy Ghost, grew wiser and more merciful. They thewed by Miracles, that they were endowed with the Divine Power, but they never used either to compel or to burn, though they were beset with false Teachers, and opposed by Gain-sayers. They were so far from giving ill Usage, that they never returned

turned it. The Exercise of wholsome Severities was no part of their Doctrine. Prayers and Perswasions were their only Arms, and

fuch as became the Gospel of Peace.

This was the mild and heavenly Behaviour of Christ and his Apostles towards those who did not believe, or believed wrong; and it was followed by all their Successors who aimed at the Good of Souls. But those who used the Sacred Function, as a Stirrup to Power and Gain, made a new Gospel of their own Decisions, and forced it upon the World, partly by Fighting, and partly by Curfing. The Apostles taught Christ, and their Succesfors taught Theinfelves. It was not enough to believe the Doctrine of Christianity, but you must believe it in Words of their inventing. To dispute their Decrees, though they contradicted common Sense and the Spirit of God, was Herefy; and Herefy was Damnation. And when, in Consequence of this, they had allotted a pious Christian to eternal Flames, for his Infidelity in them, they difpatched him thither with all speed; because he was to be damned in the other World, therefore he was to be hanged or burned in this. A terrible Gradation of Cruelty! to be curfed, burned, and damned! But it was fomething natural; it began from perfecuting Priests, and ended in Hell, and the Devil was the last and highest Executioner. Your inguests

Thus they became Prelates of both Worlds, and Proprietors of the Punishments of both.

Even

Even where the Civil Sword was not at their Command, their Vengeance was as fuccefsfully, and in my Opinion, more terribly executed without it, by the temporal Effect of their Excommunication. For the Person under it was looked upon as a Damon, and one in the Power of the Devil; and fo driven out, like a wild Beaft, from all the Comforts of Life, and human Society; to perish in a Defart, by Hunger, or the Elements, or Beafts of Prey. And all this, perhaps, for denying a Word or a Phrase, which was never known in Scripture, though impudently pretended to be fetch'd from thence.

Such dreadful Dominion had they usurped over the Bodies and Souls of Men, and fo implacably did they exercise it! And, to fill up the Measure of their Falshood and Cruelty, they blafphemoufly pretended to be ferving God, when they were acting as if there mous are the greatest Sufferers by Lenon zaw

Those who set up for Infallibility have found a good Excuse, if it were true, for the insupportable Tyranny, infinite Murthers, and wide Devastations, which their Religion has every where introduced. But those, who exact a blind Obedience to Decrees, which they own to be human, and annex Penalties to Politions, which we know to be falle, and they know to be disputable; and, in fine, act and dictate as if they were infallible, without pretending to be fo; are fo utterly without all Excuse, that I know no Lan-N 4 guage

guage which affords a Name proper for their Behaviour.

The Mahometan Imposture was professedly to be spread by the Sword. It had nothing else but that and Libertinism to recommend it. But to propagate the Christian Religion by Terror or Arms, is to deny it. It owns no fuch Spirit. It rendered it felf amiable, and gained Ground by a Principle of Peace and Love. These were the Means of Christ's instituting, for the Recommendation and Defence of his Gospel; and they, who would chufe contrary ones, charge him with Folly, and have Ends to serve very different from his. Ambition, Pride, and Revenge, may make good Use of Violence and Persecution; but they are the Bane of Christianity, which always finks when Persecution rises. The vileft and most profligate Men are ever the greatest Promoters of it; and the most virtuous are the greatest Sufferers by it. Libertines flick at nothing, but they who have the Fear of God, cannot comply with all Things. Much Sanita Much sanita

Persecution is therefore the War of Craft against Conscience, and of Impiety against Truth. Reason, Religion, and Liberty, are its great Foes; but Ignorance, Tyranny, and Atheism, its great Seconds and Support. We ought then constantly to oppose all Claims of Dominion in the Clergy; for they naturally end in Cruelty. I believe it will be hard to shew, that ever the Priesthood, at any Time,

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or in any Place, enjoyed the Power of Perfecution, without making use of it. mere Holinefs than a common Roll, or a

Have of God and Conformity to bis Will. ni haro Number XXV di lo bas Confequence of these good Affections. Bur.

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Wednesday, July 6. 1720. work connection Davil, or in a lloy's fav

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Of CONSECRATION.

OLINESS is that Character of H Purity, which originally and essenrially appertains to God Almighty. (as a Being utterly incapable of Stain and Imperfection;) but is also ascribed, in a restrained and relative Sense, to every Act of Devotion, and every Person persorming it. It is an active and rational Thing; and where it is attributed to Things inanimate or irrational, it is either merely in a figurative Sense, or in no Sense at all.

Thus, when the Elements in the Sacraments are faid to be Holy, it is meant only of the Uses to which they are apply'd, and the Purpofes for which they are taken; for, tho' they were confecrated over and over aand

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gain, yet, if they are never taken, or never devoutly taken, they have in themselves no more Holiness than a common Roll, or a

Cup of cold Water.

And thus, when a People are faid to be a Holy People, it is meant of their fincere Love of God, and Conformity to his Will, and of the Actions by them perform'd in Confequence of these good Affections. But, if such Actions, tho' seemingly devout, are superstitious, or hypocritical; there is no more Holiness in them, than in the Indians worshipping the Devil, or in a Boy's saying his Prayers to avoid Whipping.

And thus, when a House, or a Piece of Ground is said to be Holy, it is understood only of some Mark of Holiness there shewn, either by the extraordinary Presence of God, or by some Act or Acts of Worship personned there to him. But when these Marks of Omnipotence, and these Acts of Devotion cease, that Ground is no more than common Ground, and that House is a common House.

And thus, lastly, when the Priests are call'd Haly unto the Lord, it is meant only of their assisting at the solemn Acts of Adoration which are paid to him. At other times, they are as other Men; as is evident from their Living after the Manner of other Men.

Holiness, therefore, consists only in a virtuous and pious Disposition towards God, and

and is only shewn by the Actions which it produces. But as Superstition, especially when govern'd by Craft, never fails to fee, or to think it fees, Effects and Operations, which neither Religion nor common Sense can shew; hence Men have been generally perswaded that Places, Buildings, Utenfils, and Garments, did actually possess a real Holiness; that Stones and Brickbats are bleffed; and that Timber, Surplices and Bells are exceeding godly Bodies. 100 (legani)

To help on this wretched and fenfeless Credulity, the Pagan and Popilo Priests have gone fo far as to compose Farces of Legerdemain, call'd by them Offices of Confecration; the whole End of which was, they pretended, to bestow Godliness upon dead Earth, and Things inanimates Thus they deceived the People in the Name of the Lord. and gravely made Speeches (which they called Prayers) over Wood, Stones, and Iron; by Virtue of which, the faid Wood, Stones and Iron were obliged to become good Orthodox Lumber, and as fanctify'd Bodies as the other Members of the Congregation.

If one was to demand of these reverend Worthies, who required thefe Things at their Hands? I doubt it would prove a hard Question; and probably the impertinent Enquirer would be dispatch'd for Satisfaction to Satan, or the Inquisition- An effectual and orthodox Answer to such busy Unbelievers, and often practifed with terrible Success!

But as I live in a Nation where fuch Superstitions and Cruelties are, I bless God, at an End: I take Leave to be amazed at the Assurance of those Popish Consecrators, who thus impiously pretend to draw down an Attribute of the Almighty, and endow with it what Spot of Earth they please. Will thefe infolent Deceivers fay, that God Almighty cannot hear as well and as favouraally, a Prayer put up from a Ship as from a Chappel? Or in what Part of Scripture are are told that lie will be rather worthipped at Sr. Peter's, than upon the Abs; or at Loinetto, or any other confectated Place, rather chan a Booth, Or a Bayn; provided the Wor-This is performed with equal Piety? Or does e'er a Text in the New Testament inform us, that one Piece of Earth is holier than another; or that any Man or Society of Men dan make it fo? soloogoot and vievery bas

Morship more acceptable in it than in other Ground? And if it has some uncommon Sanctity in it; let those concerned tell us what it is, how it is, and by what certain Signs we shall know it? And whether it keeps all the said Holiness to it self, and amongst its own inanimate Heap of Stones, Timber, and Nails; and then what are We the better for it? Or whether the religious Bricks and Mortar do in good Earnest communicate Part of their Piety to the People? And, if

fo; in what Manner do they perform this; and how does it appear first, and operate afterwards? But if all, this is a Mystery, let them shew us where it its revealed in Seripture, wherein all other Mysteries are revealed.

If by Confectation any Change is made, the same must be either visible, or only mystical. If the Change is visible, then it comes under the Test and Examination of our Senses, and must be evident to all Men: But if the Change is purely mystical, it must be revealed to all. So that we must either have the Evidence of Sense, or the Evidence of God's Word and Authority, which is as good. But where neither of these Proofs appears, our Faith and Assent ought neither to be demanded; nor given, if demanded.

If Prayers are more prevailing with God, and divine Service more welcome to him? when they come from confecrated Ground: then all Worship and Devotion ought to be performed only at Church; and Family Religion ought either to be neglected, (as lame and infufficient) or every private House should be consecrated; and then every House would be a Chappel, and every Chappel is a Church. I would be glad to know, why only one House in a Parish should be consecrated, that is, made fit to pray in; and why not every House, for the same Reason? For, nothing that helps Devotion ought to be omitted, such Omission being doubtless a great Sin,

But if it is allowed that People may pray to as good Purpose out of consecrated Ground as in it; how are Prayers at Church better than in a Chamber, or the Fields? Or, why should the Prayers of Five Hundred have more Need of consecrated Ground, than the Prayers of One, Two, or Three? Or, if a Place becomes Holy by the Devotions perform'd in it, then every Place where Devotions are perform'd, is as Holy as another; and if so, pray what Use of a Form of Words, and a particular Office for that Purpose?

Suppose a Church to be consecrated, and yet never after used; is it, for all this, Holy? Or, suppose it has been used for all the Purposes of a Church, and yet was never formerly consecrated; is it, for all that, not

Holy ?

Either the Scripture is not a sufficient Rule of Worship, or this Business of Consectation in Popish and Pagan Countries, is a needless, empty, superstitious Foppery, an evident Trick of Priestcraft; as if the Priests could change the Nature of Things, and confer the Grace which they have not themfelves upon Stocks and Stones, that have not, nor can have, the least moral Goodness, or Pravity, in them. A General of an Army may as modeftly and rationally contend, that the Ground, on which his Pavillion stands, is valiant Ground; and that the Ticking, of which it is made, is courageous Ticking. And, according to the same Way of Reasoning,

ing, there is prodigious Policy in the Boards that compose the Council-Table; The Carpet is a long-headed Carpet, and the Wain-scot and Chairs understand wonderfully well

the Interest of Christendom. Would not oblig

If Devotion gives a Tincture of it felf to Wood and Walls; the Pravity of ill Actions must, by the same Rule, diffuse it self, and taint all the House or Fields where such ill Actions are committed. A Jobb of Lewdness must needs debauch the Curtains greatly, and the Bed-cloaths must partake of the Iniquity; and were justly punished by Fire in Herefordshire for that Reason; at which Execution, I am told, a certain devout Person now Living, was a very zealous and useful Affistant. Every Counter and Shop-board in the City must; for the like Reason, be guilty of unpardonable Tricking and Lying; and for Falshood and Dissimulation, Heaven have Mercy upon some great Buildings at the Court End of the Town!

Extent of the Influence which Holiness and Vice have upon the inanimate Creation: Is a thick Church-wall as quickly and fully impregnated with them as a thin One? And do they never extend an Inch beyond the Church and Church-yard? Or, is the Church equally Holy, whether much Devotion, or little, is perform'd in it? Or have the Popish Priests set Bounds to the Godliness of the Ground, and the Building; and said

Thus far, or thus deep, O Ground! Shall thy

Holiness extend, and no farther.

If Confecration fignifies any Thing more than a Declaration, that fuch a Place is fet aside for the Worship of God, I wish it could be explained and proved; and the rather, because Things of the most simple and obvious Nature have, by the Guile or Superstition of defigning Church-men, been render'd to the credulous gaping Multitude. mysterious and tremendous; the natural Enthusiasm which resides in the Mind of Man, having always made him the Prey and Pro-

perty of Delufion and Deluders.

Happy, thrice happy, are we, who live in a Country where all this Pagan Idolatry and these Monkish Fooleries receive no Countenance from our Laws; but, on the contrary, are forbid and punishable by them. The Laity at the Reformation had feen what Use the Priests make of this dark Jugling, and of these Hocus Pocus Tricks; and, therefore, would not fuffer them to be play'd over again, to deceive superstitious and enchanted Bigots, by making them pay great Prices to be buried in confecrated Ground, which rofe, like the Value of Jewels, as they approached nearer to the Bodies of Saints, or to the Altar, where it feems the Devil could not come at them; with many other advantageous Frauds, which I shall hereafter expose to the World, when I treat again upon this prolifick. Subject. Link home and but our bag bound and T

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Of FAITH and MORALITY.

Rigion and Vertue consist in doing good Actions, or in a Disposition to do them. These being in our Power, as we perform or neglect them, we merit Praise or Blame. But in Matters of Speculation, or Doubt, or such as are not necessarily attended with some Consequences, it is of no Moment on which side of the Question we stand. Where there is no Certainty, or Significancy, there can be no Duty. Faith without Works, in Scripture, has but a very indifferent Character: It is said to be dead; and we all know that what is dead, is useless.

If you would know any Man's Affections towards God, confult his Behaviour towards Men. Though his Professions be ever so voluminous; though his Zeal be ever so noisy;

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though he believes by the Lump, and swallows Creeds by Dozens; yet if he is immoral, he is worse than an Insidel. What is the Use of Belief, but to govern our Practice, and beget good Deeds? We all see the Necessity of living well; but to believe well, and do no more, is the same Thing, with Regard to others, as not to believe at all;

and, with Regard to our felves, worse.

A worthy Life infers worthy Principles; but a base Behaviour contradicts and dishonours an honest Profession. Will any one tell me, that a virtuous Heathen is not a better Man, and more in the Favour of God, than a profligate Christian? A Pagan, who violates not the Laws of Truth and Peace, is, in my Eyes, an infinitely more religious Person, than a turbulent and forsworn Christian Priest, though he wears a Mitte.

cellent Persons, though they were only govern'd by the simple Dictates of human Reason, and were utter Strangers to Creeds and Fathers, and our present orthodox Notions established by Law. Who, that has any Care for his Soul, any Honour for his God, or any Love for Mankind, would not rather chuse to be animated by the rational and beneficent Sentiments of these righteous Gentiles, than be possessed with the sierce and inhuman Spirit of Father Land, Friar Francis, or Doctor Bungy, though they were all found Believers?

Believers? I would have mentioned Ariflotle here with the other Ancients; but I find, that though he was very Orthodox, and a great Enemy to Dr. Clark's Arian Principles, * yet this true Believer was a very wicked Liver. However, as a true Friend to the Church, he died the Death of the Righteous, and its faid, enjoys ever-

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lasting Life. +

Besides, saying is not proving. If we would be thought Christians, we ought to fhew our felves Christians. Living well, is the best and only Evidence we can give that we believe well. If a Man professes his Faith in Jesus Christ with one Breath, and swears falfly by his Name with another, why should I give Credit to one who fo effectually contradicts himself? We do not credit the Propolitions of Mathematicians, till they have gained our Assent by Demonstration: And why should we trust any Man's Professions of Faith and Morality, before he has, by Works of Faith and Morality, proved them fincere? If we hear a Man full of the Praises of Loyalty, and yet fee him every Day rebelling, would we not take him for a Madman or a

† This is the Opinion of Sepulveda, a learned Man in the 16th Century.

^{*} Emanuel de Moura, and some other orthodox Writers Say, that Aristotle was a steady Believer of the Trinity.

The whole Article of Aristotle, in Mr. Bayle's Dictionary; is well worth reading.

Deceiver? A good Life is beneficial both to our felves and others, but a good Belief

without it, is neither.

But besides, this same Belief is perhaps necessary; and if so, what is unavoidable, is not vertuous. Where is the Praise or Merit of seeling the Heat of the Sun, or the Severity of the Winter? Or, of hearing Sounds, when our Ears are open? To believe in Christ was and is inevitable: His Miracles command Assent. But to do his Will, is a Trial of our Piety and Virtue. And for our Saviour himself, would his Law have been ever received, or his Doctrine believed, had he contradicted Both by his Example? Or could the Apostles, without leading the Lives of Christians, have gained Converts to Christianity?

I have placed Faith and Practice in this Light, to flew how little valuable the Pretence of believing well makes Men, unless they also live well. I would therefore bring our High Clergy to be tried by this Test. If they are more zealous for Orthodoxy than Piety; if they abhor a virtuous Man, who prefers the Dictates of his own Conscience, before those of their Ambition and Authority; and openly court and honour any Perfon, who is observant of the Priesthood, tho' he lives at manifest Defiance with Heaven; if they treat Unbelievers and Debauchees as pure Churchmen, and devout Christians as Schismaticks, Hereticks, and the Lord knows what,

what, their Faith is felfish and vain, and such

Religion is false and absurd.

Conformity is the Word! it is the Mother of all Virtues, and the Sanctifier of all Crimes. It is, in fine, All in All. And yet, fo weak and blind am I, that I take this fame applauded Conformity to be in some Cases a very great Sin. If a Man, for Instance, in the Worship of God, follows the Authority of any Church whatfoever, and dissents at the same Time from the Suggestions and Perswasions of his own Conscience; it is certain, that he does not worship God at all, but mocks him, adores Men, and condemns himself. If, on the other Hand, he thinks his Soul in Danger, or in no Way of being edify'd in any Church, tho' ever fo Orthodox; he ought to defert it, and join with that which appears to him better. If I should thwart or disturb my Conscience, by bowing fashionably to the Altar, I would ask the Clergy, whether ought the Altar or my Conscience to be first or most regarded? He who believes at Random, and obeys blindly, may give great Satisfaction to Churchmen; but he neither knows the Gospel of Truth, nor obeys the Precepts of the Holy Ghoft.

It is a surprizing Thing, the Selfishness and Pride of Man! What Priest is there that (in Disputes of the most trivial Nature) does not grow hot and eager for Victory, and angry if his Opinion does not prevail? In Spiritual Affairs, this Spirit of levelling all Men

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to our own Conceits, is still fiercer, and Religion, which was given and intended to subdue the Passions, is turn'd into an Engine to raise them. We are much more zealous that Men should conform to us than to Holiness, and would rather have them obedient than godly. How many High-Church Parsons would not rather see their Parishioners drunken Churchmen, than sober Dissenters?

Laymen are at least as capable of judging of Error as the Clergy, and more proper, as having no Interest on either Side of the Question. However, the latter have usurped this Privilege wholly to themselves, and with good Policy; for it has wonderfully answer'd their great Ends of Power and Wealth. We are not therefore to wonder that many of them give much more Countenance and Quarter to the most heinous Immoralities, which are only Sins against God; than to the least Variation from an Orthodox Opinion, which is an unpardonable Sin against Themselves. The greatest Mistakes, when involuntary, are innocent in the Sight of God; but in the Eyes of the Priests, the smallest are often damnable. Nay, many a Man has been pronounced a Heretick, and deliver'd to Hell and the Devil, for his pious Searches after Truth, and his devout Adherence to it.

Thus we fee that God may be pleas'd, and fome of the Clergy provok'd, by one and the fame

fame Action. From hence it wofully happens, that weak Men and Profligates, who will do and fay as they are bid, without any Biass from Reason and Conscience, are carefs'd, encourag'd and promoted; while the Wise and Virtuous, who cannot abandon Truth and the Fear of God, to promote the Crast, and humour the Pride of assuming Men, are brow-beaten, reproached and perfecuted. Mr. Whiston, and the Parson of his Parish, are known Instances of this shameful Truth.

I know feveral, who, notwithstanding their avowed Disbelief of the Gospel and all Reveal'd Religion, are in high Esteem with the High Clergy; because, tho' they deny our Saviour, they reverence his Successors; and are zealous for the Hierarchy, tho' they laugh at Religion. The Truth is, if a Man is but a hearty Churchman, it is never asked whether he is a Christian. Profligates, void of common Honesty, and common Sense, have been, and are still, reckon'd True Friends to the Church, and courted by the Ecclefiasticks, as their Patrons and Defenders. And indeed, where Religion is turned into Faction, such Measures and Alliances are natural and necessary. Many and one contents

But, in the Opinion of us Christians, a wicked Liver, whether he is a Believer or no, is an Enemy to Religion, which is propagated and supported by Example; and to human Society, which is maintain'd by the Bonds

Bonds of Morality. Whereas a good Man, though a Heretick, is a Friend to Religion, Virtue, and his Country. To conclude: He who is a Rebel to the King of Kings, is like to prove but an ill Subject to his Vice-gerent; and as bad a Pattern to his Fellow-Subjects.

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NUMBER XXVII.

cligion, are in high Elleem with th

Wednesday, July 20. 1720.

R. Burnet tells us, in his Letters of Travels, that the Priests of Italy have found out a Secret to make Men miserable, in spight of all the Abundance and Prosusion wherewith Nature hath blessed that happy Climate: They measure their own Happiness by the Peoples Calamity; enjoy no Pleasures in which they take any part; nor are satisfied with all the Plunder and Depredations they make upon them, unless they can also heighten their own Relish, by making the little they leave to the Laity, insipid and tasteless. As

As one Instance of this Truth; he informs us, that the Priests have made it a Principle of Religion in the People, to mingle Water with their Wine in the Cask, which soon sours it; whereas they always keep their own pure and unmix'd, because they say it is to be used in the Sacrament; and so he observes, that Travellers can drink no good Wine, but what they buy from the Convents.

For this and such like Reasons they preach Penances, Mortification, Fasting, and a Contempt of worldly Riches, and of all those earthly Blessings, which indulgent Heaven has given to wretched Mortals, to alleviate their Sorrows, sweeten their Calamities, and make the nauseous Draught of Life go down; whereas we cannot better shew our Acknowledgments and Gratitude to Providence, than by making a proper Use of the good Things he has given us, and by enjoying them in every Degree, which will not destroy that Enjoyment, and change it into a Missortune.

If we drink or eat more than our Heads will carry, or our Stomachs digest, Distempers, Indiscretions, and sometimes Murthers succeed; and, if we spend faster than our Incomes will supply, there is a sure Foundation laid for suture Want and Misery: But nothing can be more absurd or impious, than to make Abstinence from Food or Pleasures meritorious, any farther than it conduces to Health,

Health, or qualifies us for Business. Almighty God reserved but one Tree in all Paradise from our first Parents; but the Priests would

keep them all from their Posterity.

Besides, the Luxury of the Rich (when it does not exceed the Bounds of Vertue and Prudence) is the Wealth and Support of the Poor, and the best judged Charity: For, what we give in gross Sums to, or for the Use of those who appear to be in Necessity, is often mistaken, and applied to maintain present Idleness, or reward past Extravagance; and fometimes too, I doubt, is pocketed by those who are trusted to distribute it; whereas whatever is laid out upon the Produce of Labour, and for fuch Manufactures as employ Multitudes of People, can never be misapplied. It might easily be made appear, that there is not a Piece of wrought Silk, Linnen, or Woollen Cloth, which has not contributed to the Maintenance of more than an Hundred Thousand industrious People, who must be all kept alive one Way or other.

As it is the highest Crime to destroy our Beings, so it is proportionably wicked to endeavour to make them miserable: The Glory and Honour of God are best consulted, in promoting the Happiness of Mankind. It is profane, and a kind of Blasphemy, to attempt to persuade People, that the good God takes Pleasure in the vexing and tormenting his Creatures: He is not pleased by human Sacri-

Sacrifices, nor by human Sufferings of any Kind: A pale Aspect, the Griping of the Guts, wry and distorted Faces, and being Ghosts before our Time, will contribute to no Ends of Religion; and therefore, I confess, that I cannot see how Fasting can serve God, or answer any Purposes of Devotion, or indeed can enhance any Appetite, unless

to a good Dinner.

Nothing consequently can be more ridiculous, than for the Romish Clergy to tell us, that any Part of Religion consists in fasting Days, and fasting Weeks; which oblige the wretched People to insipid and unwholsome Diet, whilst they indulge themselves, and riot in the richest Wines, and the luxurious Dishes of Salmon and Turbatt, with all the costly Inhabitants of the Liquid Element: Besides, it is impolitick, as well as uncharitable; it discourages Trade and Industry, depopulates Nations, and depreciates Matrimony, by rendring the People unable to maintain and raise their Families.

Riches and Labour are two Words which fignify the same Thing: Nature spontaneously supplies but little to the Use of Man; all the rest is the Produce of Invention and Industry: And therefore whatever does contribute to make Mankind idle and less useful to one another, conduces so far to their Want and Misery. One Holy Day, strictly kept, robs the Poor of more than a whole Year's Charity will supply. A little loose Money

Money pick'd up at the Church-Doors, and afterwards divided between the Parson. Church-Wardens, and a few favourite Objects, will make but poor Amends for the Taxation of the Nation, and of every Person in it, with the Loss of a Day's Labour, and Profit of his Trade; which Loss probably cannot amount to less than Two Hundred Thousand Pounds, without having any Regard to the Extravagance and Debaucheries committed upon those Days; which often confume the Acquisitions of a Week, and render the common People liftless, and unwilling to return to their Labour again. I may therefore venture to affirm, that there is more Charity in taking away one Saint's Day, than in building and endowing Twenty Colleges.

However, to do Right to my Countrymen and their genuine Clergy, I must freely confess, that we suffer very little from the Penitential Observance or Fasting Part of our Holy-Days; for the Poor do not fast at all, unless they can get nothing to eat; and the Rich, in Imitation of their Guides, hold out no longer than is necessary to digest their former Excesses, and get better Stomachs to a double Dinner; as old experienc'd Sinners often live a Day or two with Sobriety and Innocence, to enjoy a Debauch the remaining Part of the Week. At the Universities, as I am told, it is quite given up, and there is not more Epicurism than on those Days;

and

and to their Churches there are ancient Veftries annex'd, which are the confecrated Repositories of Pipes, Sack and Tobacco, where the Reverends take regularly a Whisf and a Cup, to prepare them for the Fatigues of the

enfuing Service.

But how little foever Holy-Days and stated Fasts contribute either to the Temporal or Eternal Happiness of the Laity, yet the Romish Clergy have been able sufficiently to find their own Account in them: When all other Shops are shut, theirs are open; where they fell their Spiritual Cargo of Grimaces, Visions, Beads, Indulgences, and Masses, for Silver and Gold, Lands and Tenements; and to enhance the Value of their Merchandize, and perswade the People of the Reasonableness of such an Exchange, they make it their Business, and exert all their Endeavours, to depreciate worldly Happiness, and cry down all the good Things of this Earth, that they may have them all to themselves. If they can extinguish the Appetites God has given us, and teach us the Secret to live without our Estates, or to make us think it dangerous to live on them, they hope to have them for their Pains; for who can have a better Title to our Superfluities than our spiritual Guides, who have inspired us with so much refined Devotion, and have given to us lasting Estates in Paradise, in lieu of a few momentary Pleasures, and frail and earthly Tabernacles below?

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By these Arts, and many others, which I shall shew in the Progress of this Paper, the Priests are become possessed of so much Dominion and Wealth.

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Wednesday, July 27. 1720.

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By monly, meant, an inward Persuafion or determined Assent of the
Mind to a religious Proposition
affirm'd, or deny'd; and such Consent can
never be given but by the Conveyance, and
from full Conviction, of the Senses, or the
manifest Operation of the Holy Ghost; and
therefore must depend wholly upon what
appears to be infallible Inspiration, or infallible Information. In this Sense of the
Word, I doubt there can be no such thing in
the World; for as no Man living ever saw
the

the Miracles of Christ and his Apostles, or can prove his particular System from selfevident Propositions, or can be sure he is inspired by the Holy Ghost; so he cannot have Faith in this Sense, whatever he him-

felf may imagine.

Therefore the only reasonable Sense of the Word is, An Affent of the Mind to the Truth of a Proposition upon probable Arguments, or upon the Testimony of other Persons; which can never produce Certainty, but only Opinion or Belief; which must be stronger or weaker, according to the many Degrees of Probability. A probable Evidence can only produce a fuitable Affent; and when any thing does not appear at all probable to us, we cannot avoid diffenting as to the Truth of it. Almighty God does not require of us to give the Lye to our Understandings, and to put out and extinguish the only Light he has given to Men, by which they can difcern Truth from Falshood, and Vertue from Vice.

The Apostles and Evangelists, who were evidently endowed from Above with extraordinary Gifts and Graces, were undeniable Witnesses of the Truth of the Gospel, to those who saw their Miracles: And their Writings, and the Testimony which they bequeath'd to their Followers, sealed, as it was, with their Blood, have passed the Examination of many Ages, and constitute the highest Degree of human Probability, and consequently carry along

along with them an irrelifible Authority, and can admit of no Disobedience or Dispute: They are a real Authority, in the most strict Sense of the Word; I mean, as it is apply'd to the Propagation of Religious Opinions, and as producing a lively Faith

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But no Decisions or Resolutions of uninspired Men are, or ought to be, of any weight with us, but so far as they will bear the Examination of our Senses and our Reason. The only Morive any Man can have to believe, or to put this Confidence in another, is, that the Person trusted is not deceived himself, and will not deceive him; neither of which he can have any tolerable Assurance of: for no Man is infallible; and the gravest and most solemn Pretenders, are as easily cheated as the meer Vulgar; and, what is more, will as often lye and cheat others; and therefore there can be no fuch thing as Authority in this Sense amongst Men : For let a Matter in it self be ever so certain, I am by no Precept human or divine obliged to believe it true, till it is proved true; and it is the Bufiness of my Reason alone to diflinguish what is fo from what is otherwise.

God's Word, though to be believ'd without Proof, yet ought first to be proved to be his; which Proof, it is the Province of my Understanding to examine. The Words and Allegations of Men, or of the Church, ought, before they are believ'd, to be proved, either

by

by divine Authority, or by Reason: If by Reason; then Reason must judge of Reason, and every Man who has it is a Judge: If by Divine Authority; even here our Reason must be satisfied, whether it is Divine Authority or not. So that human Authority is either nothing at all; or at most only an Opportunity given, or an Invitation made, to examine by private Judgment, the Truth of what it says.

All Books therefore, except the Holy Scriptures, and all Names, except those of our blessed Saviour and his inspired Followers, ought to be of no Authority with us, any farther than to convince our Understandings by solid Arguments, and self-evident Truths; and a Beggar or a Cobler, when he can do this, is so far entitled to equal Credit, or, if you will, to equal Authority, with Councils

and Fathers. bound

Every Man, that reasons with you, appeals to your Reason, and his Arguments lie at your Mercy, whether you will believe them or no; and every Man, who brings you only his Assertions, ought also to bring you his Proofs, or else you are at full Liberty to reject or despise them: It adds nothing to his Weight in this Matter, that perhaps he wears a Cloven Cap or a Sable Gown: There have been no greater Deceivers of Mankind, than such as have worn these Emblems of Gravity; and indeed Gravity has ever been one essential Characteristick of Imposture.

There

There is no Authority in founding and fanctified Names, whether they be those of Archbishaps, Bishops, Priests, or Deacons. It is very certain, these goodly Words are so far from having any Charm in them against Deceit and Roguery, that the compleatest of all Villanies, and the most masterly and mischievous of all Delutions, have been, and still are, protected and propagated by them in Popilb and other Priest-ridden Nations. His Holiness and Most Holy, are Terms appropriated to St. Peter's Chair, (and in our precious Pope Laud's Days they began to be current as Lambeth) altho' most that filled that Chair, have liv'd at Defiance with God and Man, and were the greatest Deceivers and Disturbers of the World.

Nor is there any certain Authority in Learning of any kind or degree. Who are better Scholars, or greater Rogues, than the Jefuits? Who was a more learned Man, or a greater Simpleton, than Mr. Dodwell? And, as to his genuine Ancestors, Aquinas and Scotus, those celebrated Founders of the Schools; who have been long the infallible Guides of the infallible Church; they were the most voluminous and most unintelligible Dunces that ever dabled in Sophistry, and darkened com-

mon Sense.

Pray what Evidence of Truth necessarily attends the Knowledge of the Oriental Tongues? The Jews understand Hebrew, and the Turks Arabick; and yet both continue fierce and obstinate Enemies to Christianity.

Nor are Men the more to be trufted, merely because they are acquainted with Eccles fiaftical History and the Fathers. As to the Fathers, they are guilty of grievous Errors against Orthodoxy, and Church Power; infomuch that Father Petavius, the Jesuit, has pretended to prove that most of them were infected with Herefy, especially in their Notions about the Undivided Trinity. We all know, that St. Austin (the Foreman of all the Latin Saints and Fathers) was for admitting Children to the Lord's Supper, contrary to the Doctrine and Practice of our Church of England as by Law established. St. Ferom derives Episcopal Power from the Insligation of the Devil, which is also an impudent Reflection upon our Orthodox Church. St. Bafil (I think it was) very fairly challenged the Emperor, his Liege Lord, to fight him; in defiance of the Doctrine of Paffive Obedience, which is the peculiar Doctrine of our High Churchmen; and which, unless a Man believes and practifes, he cannot be faved. St. Ambrose bullied Theodosius, the Lord's Anointed; and refused to admit his Imperial Majesty to partake of the Lord's Body, till he had made his humble Submission. Gregory Nazianzen gives a miserable and vile Character of Synods and Councils; and his Grace of Canterbury, when he was Bilhop of Lincoln, and before, did the fame. Dr. Prideaux shews Tertullian to have been a credulous weak Man, often miltaken and milled. 200 P- 2

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As to Ecclefiaftical History, which is nothing but many large Volumes, containing fome few of the Squabbles of the Bishops and inferior Clergy with one another, and all the World; I know not whether the Use of it can much alter for the better any Man's Life and Principles; fince the most he can learn by it is, that the Reverend Heroes of of the Story were eternally cuffing and contradicting one another. Nothing of Humility, nor of Charity, nor of Uniformity, nor of Certainty, is to be found amongst them, or learned from them. And I know not at this Day any prevailing Opinion of any Sect of Christians, but what is both countenanced and condemn'd by one Father, or another.

Lastly; even the most apparent Piety, the most disinterested Mind, and the most unblameable Life, tho to me certain Signs of a good Man, yet in the Eye of our best High Church-Men, are only shining Sins, and cannot entitle the Possessor to the least good Word or Tenderness; much less to any Authority amongst Men. Dr. Clarke, Mr. Whiston, and others, are undeniable Instances

Upon the whole; Authority, as it is generally understood, is a Word pregnant with Danger and Nonsence. It is a false misleading Light, or rather none at all; for those who follow it, do only grope in the Dark: When we blindly trust to another, our own Eyes grow useless, or may give offence.

This

This shews its Peril; and for its Absurdity, it will appear from hence, that it is impossible to trust to one Authority, without trusting to more. For, either my own Reason must be consulted and followed; and if so, there is an end of all Authority: Or else, I must trust to some Authority to direct me what Authority I must trust to. And, if I have Liberty to chuse my first Guide, why not also my second, and so on? For, no Reason can be given, why I may rely on my Judgment in one Case, and yet must resign

it in just such another Case.

But if no Choice at all is left us in thefe Matters, pray how shall we discern Herefy from Orthodoxy, and a regular Set of Ecclefialticks, from an irregular? If I am born in Scotland, and educated in the Presbyterian Way; must I continue in an invincible Antipathy to what is there called proud, lordly Prelacy, and Superstitious Surplices, and Popish Ceremonies? Or, have I a Right to examine and embrace the Doctrine and Discipline of our Orthodox Established Church? Or, am I to embrace them without examining them? And is my Judgment to approve and condemn, only what the Parson approves and condemns; and, in all other Spiritual Matters, to lie still and take its rest? If I leave one Church for another, out of Judgment; how am I to behave my felf when my Judgment changes? Or, is it our Duty to conform, in spight of our Inclinations? And have we no Right P 3

Right to diffent with Conscience and Convic-

tion on our Side?

n on our Side?
To conform without confenting, is a Contradiction, and a Mockery to the Spirit of Religion: And to conform, because I approve, is no Compliment to Authority, but, indeed destroys it, and justifies every Man in every Religion, provided he has taken all necessary Pains to find out the true one. If I have a Liberty to enquire which is the best Church, I have also a Liberty to blame its Errors, if fee any, as well as to admire its Excellencies: And the Authority of no Man or Men shall determine me in either, in Opposition to my Reason. If I praise the Advantages of any Church, I am my felf praifed by its Votaries, for doing Justice to those Advantages, which my Reason shews me : But if the same Reason discovers Blemishes in it, I am condemned by the same Votaries, for what I cannot help. So that I am applauded for Seeing, and damned for Seeing, at the same time, and from the same Principle; namely, that of Passion and Partiality, bodin O to

There is therefore no Authority but two, Scripture and Reason. The Scripture is our Rule of Faith; and Reason, where God gives not his Spirit, is our Rule for under-

thight of our Inclinations? And have we so

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T has often been the Subject of my ferious Thoughts, to what Causes are owing the Depravation of Vertue and Morality in the

World, and the seeming Decay of Human Understanding. If we read the Greek, Roman, and other ancient Histories, we shall find another Race of Men, than seem to be now existing upon the Face of the Earth. Alexander had Conquer'd the East before Thirty: Scipio and Hannibal performed Actions of great Eclat before Twenty: Pompey Triumph'd over Europe, Asia and Africa, long before his Middle-Age. Indeed, thro' the whole Roman Story, we find their Generals, Orators, and Statesmen, shone in full Lustre in their early Youth; and could demand their Discharge from publick Business, before

before the Age at which we are often thought

qualify'd to enter upon it.

This Difference fure cannot be owing to any real Decay of Human Nature, which undoubtedly has been always the fame fince the Flood; on the contrary, 'tis to be prefumed, fince Almighty God hath communicated to us the marvelous Light of his Gofpel, and has made himself more known to Men, that their Faculties are bettered and improved. Besides, this Difference is observable only in fuch as are entitled, by their Birth and Fortunes, to the most liberal Education; for, as to Arts and Sciences, the Moderns eminently (as I conceive) exceed the Ancient: They are better Mathematicians, and Mechanicks, better Navigators, better Musicians, and better Husbandmen, and they attain early to their greatest Perfection in these Arts; and therefore we must look out for other Causes to account for this Phanomenon, which I conceive to proceed only from their different Manner of Education.

The Antients were instructed by Philosophers, and the Moderns are taught by Priests: The first thought it their Duty to make their Pupils as useful as possible to their Country, and the later as subservient to themselves, and the Interests of their Order: One endeavoured to inspire them with noble and generous Sentiments, equally sit for Dominion or Subjection; and the Other always instill into them abject, fordid and pusillanimous Principles, to quali-

before

fy them to be proper Tools for their own low Purposes: In short, the first made it their Study and Business to enlarge and improve their natural Faculties, and growing Reason; and the latter to pervert, stifle and extinguish every Approach towards true

Knowledge and publick Vertue.

As foon as the Emperors and their Courts came into the Church, Ambition and Pride got in too; and the Innocence and Simplicity of primitive Christianity became corrupted, and changed into outward Pomp and Pageantry: The Clergy bethought themselves how (in the Modern Phrase) to make the best of their Bible: Unluckily it was all against them; and tho' they read it over and over, they found it every where levelled against Spiritual Pride and Domination, and they could not so much as pick out one direct Text for their Purpose.

What must be therefore done in this momentous Affair? The Holy Writings were dispers'd Abroad, and could not be suppressed, and yet Riches and Power were of indispensable Necessay to the Good of the Church? Why! since they could not get them out of the Peoples Hands, they contrived how to render them of as little Use as possible there; and, in Order to it, they pointed all their Batteries against Human Reason, and Polite Learning, and made it an heinous Sin to read any Heathen Authors: By which Means, in an Age or two, sew could

could read at all; and the Romans, so famous for Knowledge, Vertue and Humanity, became (for the most Part) sunk to the lowest Dregs of Barbarism, Superstition and

Ignorance. Townsq of tollist ontil

But left the curious and inquifitive Part of Mankind should not be wholly diverted from the Search after Knowledge, they invented and substituted in its Room, a senseless Jargon of undefined, infignificant, and canting Terms, confused Ideas, and indistinct Images; which they perswaded the World to esteem profoundLearning and deepWifdom: And then they reduced and determin'd all Questions in Philosophy and Religion by this Gibberish; and he got the Victory, who could hold out longest, and most confound his Auditory, by entangling them in an endless Labyrinth of Nonfense. Men of Wit and Genius were distasted at a Study, which would cost them fo much Pains to attain, when they could find neither Pleafure in the Pursuit, nor Profit or Improvement in the Conquest; and having no Notion of any other Learning, they confented to let the Clergy have it all inece they to themselves.

When they had so reduced the Laity to this happy and desireable State of Stupidity and Submission, they took away their Bible from them too; or, which was the same Thing, they continued it only in a Language, which, by the many Conquests upon the Empire, and the Revolutions of Time, was

The Independent Whiz. 219.

understood by none but themselves. And now, having converted their Hearers into Asses, and Beasts of Carriage, they bridled them, they sadled them, they yoked them, and put heavy Burthens upon them, till they so overloaded the Jades, that they grew resty, and overturn'd their Packs and Riders too.

Thus the World came by the Reformation; which dispersed the thick Mist of Superstition and Ignorance, that then overshadowed all Christendom: The Laity were refolved to be no longer hood-wink'd; but a general Disposition arose in Europe, to revive ancient Learning and useful Knowledge: And the Greek and Roman Authors were fought after, rescued from Dust and Worms, and diligently read. Many Princes promoted thefe Studies, and gave all due Encouragement to Vertue and Learning: But this noble Spirit of Liberty lasted no longer than the Lives of those Princes, and while the Images of facerdotal Oppressions were deep engraven in Mens Minds; which, like all other Things, wore out by Degrees. Salvelonem war agus

The Unum Magnum, necessary to secure all the rest, was never thought of, or forgotten; which was to retrieve the Education of Youth out of the Hands of the Priesthood, and to reform the Universities, (which were contrived and established by Popes to support their own Pride and Power over the unhappy Laity,) and instead of suffering them

and Ecclesiastical Usurpations, to convert them into Schools of Vertue, Liberty, Knowledge, and true Religion: The old Leaven was permitted to remain, and the Clergy had still left to them the Education of the Nobility and Gentry in most Countries; and

they were educated accordingly.

It became a Maxim in the Universities Abroad, That those, who were born to large Posfessions and Estates, had no need of Learning; and fuch were always encouraged or connived at in mispending their Time in Idleness and Luxury, and were generally made the Companions of their Governors and Tutors in their Pleasures, who were perpetually instilling into their tender Minds Tyrannical or Slavish Principles. But when they had to do with Youths of sprightly Wit and Genius, who either, from their own Inclinations, or the Impulfe of their Relations, would not be diverted from the Pursuit of Knowledge; they indu-Ariously put them upon a wrong Scent, and perplexed and confounded their Understandings with metaphyfical Whimfeys, and an artificial Cant: out of which many of them could never extricate their Senses; and fuch as did, fpent often as many Years after they came into the World to do fo, as they loft before in the Universities, to be upon the Level with those who had never been there eve nowed bas and Power over the unhappy Luicy,) and inflead of tufforing cham-

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This foon became again the State of Learning and Knowledge amongst the Nobility and Gentry: Either they had none at all, or fuch as they were the worse for having; infomuch that those, whose Birth and Fortunes intitled them to be Legislators and Governors of Mankind, were themselves the Slaves and Dupes of Pedagogues and Chaplains, were contented to do all their Drudgery, and be humble Instruments to their Pride and Luxury.

However, as the Priests could not agree amongst themselves about sharing the Laity, and, as Printing about this Time came into Christendom, which made it impracticable to suppress all Copies of useful Books, or hinder them from being read; many Persons have had the Vertue and Resolution to oppose Clerical Usurpation, and have kept alive fome Spirit of Liberty, in Spite of all the Efforts of Priestcraft and Delusion, ever supported by worldly Interest, and too often

by worldly Power.

It is a hard Circumstance for Truth, that in most Countries it must subfist upon Converts; and Education, Interest and Authority must combine against it: But if, notwithstanding all their Efforts, its own clear Evidence and irrefiftible Authority can make fuch a Progress in the World, what might we not expect, if the Approaches and Passages to it were made easy and advantageous, and proper Rewards and Encouragements given

to the Promoters and Discoverers of such Philosophy and Knowledge, as will make Men useful to themselves and their Coun-

try ?

It cannot be doubted, but ancient Vertue and ancient Eloquence would revive again; the Nobility and Gentry of Christendom would resume their proper Stations; and exceed the inferior Part of Mankind, as much in publick Spirit, Courage and Wisdom, as they do in Fortune and Quality; and possibly might in Time as much outshine the Greeks and Romans in those great Endowments, as they are evidently outdone in such Arts and Sciences, as the Priests do not pretend to teach, and seldom know any Thing of.



proper Rewards and Encouragements given

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Wednesday, August 10. 1720.

Of EDUCATION. Part 2.

tall of one Liquor as merpable of receiving

OT all the Cruelty of Tyrants, the Subtilty and Craft of Priests, or the Malice of Devils, have ever invented or brought a greater Plague or Mischief upon Mankind, than: false Learning: We may be upon our guard against all other Calamities; but here the Enemy is within us, and admitted at alltimes to the innermost Recesses of our Souls: where he acts the Part of a treacherous Friend, betrays us under the Pretence of ferving us, and administers Poifon in Cups of feeming Nectar and Ambrofia: We are gradually deprived of our Senses, whilst we think we are improving them; become Fools by Industry and great Application; like Tantalus, are straved with an imaginary Banquet at our Months; and, in the midst of an appearing

pearing Profusion of Knowledge, want common Sense; and, what is yet worse, are infensible of our wanting Distemper, and con-

fequently are incapable of a Remedy.

Our Minds as well as Bodies are eafily distorted, and put out of their natural Frame; Absurdity and Nonsense is to be learn'd, and good natural Faculties may be improved into foolish Ones, or none at all. A Man, like a Vessel, is capable of holding only a certain Quantity, which when it is full of one Liquor is incapable of receiving another; and even when the first is drawn out, it generally leaves a Tincture behind it. The Mind, when rightly fet out, usefully employ'd, and upon proper Objects, will improve, and every Day strengthen; but when conversant only with Visions, Phantoms and Whimfeys, will affimilate with the Company it keeps, and by Degrees loofes its distinguishing Faculty.

A proper Exercise, and a natural Use of the Limbs, give Health and Vigour, as well as Gracefulness and becoming Motion; whereas Grimace and abfurd Posture, are Qualifications only for Jack-Puddings and Merry-Andrews. One who has been long taught by an ill Master, is farther from a good Dancer, than another who has never begun; because he must unlearn all his ill Habits, to be in the Circumstance of him who has not learn'd at all; as a Man, who gets out of his Road, is farther from his Journey's End, than PERFINE

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if he had staid at Home; and commonly must return thither again, to find out his right

Way.

Whoever spends his Time in reading foolish Books, and in studying useless or false Speculations, will grow the greater Coxcomb, the greater Progress he makes: He is learning backwards, and undermining and destroying the first Sparks, innate Principles, or Capacity of Knowledge, and in time will be fortify'd and impregnable against common Senfe. A great Philosopher tells us, that Ignorance is a middle State between Knowledge and false Learning; that is to say, one who is wholly untaught and unimproved, is as much above a Learned Man, in the common Acceptation of the Word, as a Man well educated does exceed another who has had no Education at all: The Capacity of the first is entire, and susceptible of Information; whereas in the other, all the Avenues and Passages to Wisdom are destroy'd or lock'd up, and he is so puzzled, perplexed and confounded in a Maze of improved Nonfense and Absurdity, that he can never get through it or out of it. The Acquisitions in fuch Learning have been aptly compared to the fluttering and rumbling of a Swallow falling down a Chimney, who, when he is at Bottom, flies about, and hurries backwards and forwards to every Window, and every Corner of the Room, to make his Escape, but never thinks of the Way

Way he came in, and so becomes an easy Prey to the first Enemy which assaults him.

Whoever is conversant with Scholasticks. and has any Understanding of his own, (if fuch a Correspondence can possibly be) must readily affent to this Truth. It is even grown a Proverb in the Learned Language, that, Merus Scholasticus est merus Asinus: What an Appearance do these Reverend Drones and accomplish'd Dunces make amongst Mankind? How are they exceeded in Converfation, agreeable Address, and useful Knowledge, by the youngest Gentlemen, by Soldiers and Merchants, and often by Mechanicks and Tradesmen, who can only write and cast Accompts? Nothing but the Solemnity of their Habits, and the auftere Gravity of their Phiz, Mien and Behaviour, hinders them from being the Jest and Contempt of Women and Boys. It is faid, Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, once took a Conceit to invite all the deep Chins about the Town to a magnificent Entertainment spread upon a long Table; and he made himself amends, by fitting at the upper End, and enjoying the Visto. Indeed I cannot deny, but I have fometimes had fuch a fort of ill-natur'd Pleafure, in imagining that I faw some of the Governors of the Two Universities (with others of their Betters, who shall be nameless) uncased of their reverential Robes, and dreffed up with Hats and Feathers, Swordknots, and laced Coats, and in that Equipage

page marching in folemn Dump, like a Call of Serjeants from Temple-Bar to Westmin-

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Remidence Uncertain Tolland They give us, in fome Degree, the fame Figure, when they shew in the Grand Monde: Like Snails, they carry their Houses about them, and bring Pedantry, Conceit, four Humour, Bigorry, magisterial Grimace, and ill Manners, into all Conversations where they have to do; and indeed are not fit for any. till they have been often kick'd out of it. They have neither the Temper of Christians, the Reason of Philosophers, or the Affability of Gentlemen, and therefore are justly despised by them all. Fryar John, as I remember, asks of Panurge or Pantagrouel, in Rabelais, what is the Reason that the Houshold Priest is used worse than any one else in the Family? And, I think, he answers, because he neither ploughs the Ground like the laborious Ox, carries Burthens like the useful Horse, nor keeps the Door like the faithful Dog; but, like the Monkey, runs about every where fouling the House, chartering and making a Noise, biting People's Fingers, and doing nothing but Mischief; and fo every Body has a Stroke at him, and gives him a Knock as he passes by.

The Writings of many of these solemn Gentlemen are of the same Kind, and carry the same tragical and grim Aspect. They would be Dictators in Faith and Science, and to their Books are full of the Spirit of Pe-

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dantry,

dantry, false Zeal, and Ill-breeding; and, under the Appearance and Assectation of Learning, contain only Paradoxes, Uncertainty, harsh Severity, or awkward Bussoonery. Any one, who is the least acquainted with these dogmatical Zealots, these punning Inquisitors, must own that I have done Justice to their Characters, and the Merit which runs through them; unless in some Instances, mostly about this great Town, where an uncommon natural Genius, Liberty of Mind, generous Birth, or a free Conversation, have got the better of a constrain'd and corrupt Education.

I thank God, such as have of late Years had the Honour of being admitted to great Dignities, and been brought into the Legiflature or Royal Councils, are of the latter fort: But what Figure have others formerly made in the Senate House, or Council Board? How much below young Noblemen, who had never been at the Universities, or had just forgor what they had learned there, and rubb'd or filed off College Rust by polite Conversation? In One, you might have observed an Easiness of Address, Softness of Speech, and Freedom of Thought; in the Other, Starchness of Behaviour, Sourness of Looks, and starved Conceits, urged with fierce and imperuous Rage. A lare Noble and great Genius of our Age and Country, compares them to those Grotesque Figures, and Dragon-Faces, which are often feen in the dantey

the Frontispiece, and upon the Corner-Stones of old Buildings: They seem placed there as the Desenders and Supporters of the Edisice; but with all their Grimace, are as harmless to People without, as they are useless to the Building within.

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Number XXXI.

Mind. "As to Bodily Religious and Corpo-

Wednesday, August 17. 1720.

Of CEREMONIES.

it is folly alleemed the Glory and benci-

LAINNESS and Simplicity are not more inseparable Marks of Truth, than they are of true Religion, which wants neither Paint nor Pageantry to recommend it self to the Hearts of Men. It wins the Assections, by the Force of its Perswasions; and the Understanding, by the Reasonableness of its Precepts. It abhors Violence, as opposite to its Nature; and despites Art and Policy, as below its Dignity. Human Ornaments may

hide and disfigure, but cannot preferve nor improve its intrinsick Beauty, and divine Lustre: And Pomp and Grimace, as they are no wife a-kin to it, so neither are they the Effects of it, nor bring any Advantage to it. On the contrary, they rend to fill the Mind with gross Ideas, or sullen Fear; and so create Superstition instead of Piety, and Farce instead of Worship.

God himself has told us, that he will be worshipped in Spirit and in Truth: which shews, that Love and Sincerity constitute Devotion, and that Religion resides in the Mind. As to Bodily Religion, and Corporeal Holiness, the Gospel is silent about them; leaving every one at full Liberty to behave his own Way in the Practice of

Piety.

It is justly esteemed the Glory and Felicity of the Christian Religion, that by it we are released from that grievous Yoke and Bondage of Ceremonies, which neither we nor our Fathers were able to bear. It is a Religion of Reason, void of all Superfluities,

and trifling Impertinences.

Men cannot judge of one another's Thoughts and Inclinations, but by Words and Actions: And, because it would be both troublesome and filly to be on every Occasion haranguing our Friends and Superiors, upon the prosound Veneration which we profess for their Persons or Characters; it has become necessary to agree upon some outward

outward Forms, to denote internal Respect. And this I take to be the only good Reafon which can be given for fuch Manner of Addrefs or Ceremony. It is ridiculous, either by Sounds or Gestures, to tell a Man over and over again, what he knows already: and therefore, the most intimate Friends and old Acquaintance make but little Use of Shew or Complement; and those, who make most, are ever found the least fincere. But how fenfeless and absurd must it be to entertain Heaven with fuch Grimaces! that Heaven, which fearches our Hearts, and knows our most hidden Thoughts; and will not be deceived by outward, arbitrary and fallacious Marks of inward Disposition!

It can never be conceived, that the Allmerciful and Omniscient God should, by the fending of his Son, abolish, or suffer to be abolished, the whole Fewish Legion of Ceremonies, tho' appointed by himself in Perfon; and should graciously condescend to establish a new Dispensation, destitute of all Ceremony and exterior Grandeur; and yet should leave it to the Ambition of designing Men, or to the Folly of weak ones, to invent and impose a fresh Load of Rituals, in Opposition to the plain Genius of the Gospel. This would be for the All-merciful, to be merciful in vain; for the Creator to refign his Power to the Creature; and for God to recall his own Injunctions, which he once gave for a gracious and wife End, fince ceaf-Q 4

ed, that Men may enforce their's, for a weak or a wicked one.

Nothing is, or can be, pure Religion, but either what God commands and tells us he will accept; or what is dictated by eternal Reason, which is the Law of Nature: And whatever is superadded, however dignissed by a venerable Name, is no Part of true Religion; which, as has been said, can be supported by nothing but Divine Revelation, or Divine Reason. When both these are wanting, we wander in the Dark, and worship blindsold; being led by the Hand of Conjecture and Invention, which are uncertain and endless.

This is fo true, that where ever there is true Religion, there are few Ceremonies: And, on the other Hand, where Ceremonies abound, there Religion is either utterly loft, or miferably decayed; and, in Popish Countries, it is more or less visible, according as Ceremonies and Bigotry (which, like Caufe and Effect, go always Hand in Hand) are more or less practifed or promoted. Thus, in France, where, thro' the Commerce of that Kingdom with Protestants, there are still some Remains of common Sense, and consequently of Religion; God Almighty is worshipped as well as dead Men, tho' not so much: Whereas, in Italy and Spain, the Saints have deprived their Maker of all Devotion; and the Bleffed Virgin, St. Dominick, St. Jago, and St. Anthony, are, by these hot-

hot-headed Bigots, made Governors of Heaven and Earth, and the Givers of eternal Life; and confequently are become, next immediately after the Priests, the only Objects of their Adoration. If you deprive them of their Saints and their Ceremonies, there is not the least Face of Religion lest amongst them.

So little has Christianity gained by Ceremonies, that a great Part of Mankind have, by Adopting them, banished all true Religion. If they were introduced, as it is alledged, to kindle Piety; I am forry to fay, it has fo happened, that this Heat of Devotion has quite drank up the Truth and Vitals of Religion; and the blind Compliance with a fenseless Cringe, invented and enjoyned by a Popish Priest, is made of more Importance and Merit, than the Possession of all Moral and Christian Vertues, without it. Religion, good Sense, and Humanity, are inseparable Friends; but a superstitious Fondness for Ceremonies is a Contradiction, and an Affront to all the Three.

The Teachers of Mankind have, for the greatest Part, been the most unteachable of all Men; and these our Guides to Peace have been always the Foremost to break it. They have seen, from Time to Time, the Violence and ungodly Essects produc'd by their Contention for Human Forms, Habits, and Decisions; and yet, where the Religious Laity and the Law did not interpose, to restrain

restrain this Unchristian Behaviour in Churchmen, they have not only still adhered with Obstinacy to their Inventions and Impositions, but frequently made it their Business to broach new ones, and to throw about fresh

Balls of Strife and Cruelty.

Ceremonies were first brought in under a very plausible Pretence; namely, that of aiding and promoting Religion: But we have seen, by above a Thousand Years Experience, that these its pretended Friends always become its real Rivals and successful Enemies; and, by the Help of those, whose Interest it was to contrive and support them at any Rate, never failed to banish it as far away as their Power extended.

It is pretended, that the Invention of stated Ceremonies and Garments, is justified by these Words of St. Paul to the Corinthians. Let all Things be done decently, and in order: which Words are only a Precept to avoid Immodesty and Confusion, in their religious Assemblies. Two, for Example, were not to speak at the same Time: One was not to fing Pfalms, while another prayed. Neither Love nor Trade was to be the Bufiness of their Meetings; nor Tithes and their own Power the Drift and Business of the Preachers: Christ was not to be confounded with Belial: nor Pride and Dominion with Meekness and Christianity: Exhorting was not to be mix'd with Railing, nor Praying with Curling; nor were the People to be taught

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to hate one another: In short, God was to be adored with the Heart and Affections, and not with a Fiddle, or a Pipe and Tabor.

I do not find, that the Apostle's Words were understood in any other Sense than this, by those to whom they were addressed: It does not appear that immediately upon the Sight of St. Paul's Epistle, the Corinthians concluded that Prayers should be said in Surplices; and that the Faithful, as soon as the Word was given, should kneel, stoop and stand, or turn to the Right or Lest, like a File of Musqueteers; or that they were to nod towards the East, as if the Almighty kept his Court only there.

Nor were the Corinthians directed by this Text to play Popish Tricks over the Forehead of a Babe baptized, as sure and certain Signs of Regeneration: Nor were they commanded to put up their Petitions in Quavers, and to sing their Prayers as well as say them; nor was that subtle Distinction then and there found out, of bowing at the Name of Jesus, but not at the Name of Christ or of God.

All these pretty Fashions were unknown to the Apostle and his Correspondents; and their Genteelness and Significancy have been long since discovered by the Romish Clergy in the later Days; and indeed, it is now become impossible to make one's Court well without them.

The Words Decorum and Significancy, which are made use of to justify the Celebration

bration of Ceremonies, are Words of fuch prodigious Latitude, that the World does not agree, nor ever can agree, what it is that does come properly under their Denomination, and what does not. With the Turks it is decent to be covered at Devotion; with us, to be bare-headed. How is the wearing of a Periwig, or a Cap, more decent and orthodox than the wearing of a Hat? How is a Prunella Gown, or a Lawn Frock more fignificant than a Cloth Coat? Is God Almighty better pleased with a Cambrick Band, than with a Muslin Cravat? And is an Organ Loft more acceptable to him, than plain Country Piety, that has neither Motion nor Musick in it? wind and not wo

If Men are at Liberty to invent and enjoin one unnecessary Ceremony, why not two? And if two, why not two Thousand? When such a Power is once granted, it cannot be easily, nor indeed reasonably limited. If the Clergy can oblige me to throw my Head into my Bosom, upon their pronouncing certain Sounds; they may, by the same Right, upon pronouncing different Sounds, oblige me to run it against a Stone Wall: Nay, which is still worse, whoever has an Authority to direct my Manner of Worship, must have also a Power to direct the Matter of it, and may command me Whom to worship as well as How.

Superstition in the People, and Power in the Priests, were the true Ends and Consequences

quences of creating Popist Ceremonies; for, as to their Significancy, it was a meer Bubble and Pretence. Such a Plea would justify endless Phrenzy and Fooleries; and every Madness would be made a Mystery. For Instance; we might be made to walk barefooted into the Church, to fignify the Sanctity of the Place; and to crawl upon all Four out of it, to fignify the Humiliation of our Hearts. A Match of Cudgel-playing every Sunday might be instituted, to signify our spiritual Warfare; and a Game at Blindman's-Buff, to fignify the Darkness of our Understandings. In short, any Thing might be made to fignify every Thing; and any Punishment be inslicted upon the profane Gainfayer: And upon this Foot may be justify'd all the Pagan and Popish Fopperies that ever were, or ever could be invented; and nothing can be faid against all the many Garments, and many Colours, and many antick Gestures used by the Romish Priests at this Day.

It must be evident to every intelligent Man, that all this pretty Pageantry and Raree-Shew, can never make Men more acceptable to God, who will not be gratified or obliged by a Jigg or a Tune. But, I believe I may safely affirm, that if all this Merry-making and jovial Devotion in the Popish Churches do no manner of Good, they must needs do Harm; because they divert the Mind from deliberate Devotion and calm

calm Repentance, and can at best only work it up to a wild and enthusiastick Worship.

However, tho' this pompous Parade in Piety does no Service to Religion, it effectually answers the End proposed by it; and contributes vaftly, as every Thing elfe does, to the Advancement and Grandeur of the Romilb Clergy, as it turns Mens Thoughts from divine Objects to a superstitious Veneration for Postures, Habits, Grimaces, Cringes, Utenfils, &c. all invented by Priefts, who are always fure to appoint themselves Masters of the Ceremonies, and to be well paid for their deep Knowledge in this momentous Science: Befides, it lifts into their Service great Numbers of People; fuch as Organists, Fidlers, Singing-Men, with all the piping and chanting Crew, as well as Artificers of various Kinds. It engages Men of Pleasure, and Ladies, in their Interests; and it catches the Mobility by the Ears and the Eyes, and fers them a staring; and it alleviates their own Drudgery of frequent Preaching and Praying: It also serves the Purposes of Interludes in the perpetual Tragedies they are acting; which they render less terrible, by playing, like Nero, upon their Harps, in the Midst of Conflagrations of their own making do to What a Bleffing is it to this Church and

What a Blessing is it to this Church and Kingdom, that all this Farce in Devotion is forbidden by the Act of Uniformity, as well as by our Homilies; as shall be further taken Notice of, when I treat again upon the same Subject.

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During all this holy fixercitie, which was NUMBER XXXII. Minds were ponels'd with as drunken les-

flivity, and Wantonucky, or with Craziness

were also to utters correin hardit and devious Sounds, Which had no Mesman, thu Were

Wednesday, August 24. 1720.

Of CEREMONIES. Part 2.

weed black blown on the Author Y last Paper treated of superstitious Ceremonies; and this shall contain a Profecution of the same Subject. and sponding as Managel

The Pagan Religion confifted altogether in a vast Number and Variety of strange and fenfeless Ceremonies; and, being foolish and false, it could consist of nothing else. Its Votaries had, for their Religious Task, certain frantick Actions to perform, certain wanton Motions to make, or certain mad Races to run; fometimes galloping about the Streets like Lunaticks, Stark naked, and fometimes half naked; or in a religious antick Drefs, fignificantly fuited to their Behaviour. They were to be religious with their Heads, Feet, Joints, and their other Organs: They beer

were also to utter certain harsh and devout Sounds, which had no Meaning, but were prodigious fignificant, and being very ridi-

culous, were very decent.

During all this holy Exercise, which was edifying in Proportion as it was mad, their Minds were possess'd with a drunken Festivity and Wantonness, or with Craziness and Enthusiastick Fear. They were either lewd or raving, Rakes or Fanaticks. It never entred into their Heads, nor did their Priests ever put it into them, that Religion was a fober Thing, confisting in the Exercise of Reason, and the Practice of Virtue. No: a Spirit of Sobriery, or a Ray of Understanding, would have blown up the Authority and Dominion of the Heathen Parsons; and therefore, the poor Lay Pagans were not fuffered to know that a Man might be a religious Man, without being a good Dancer, and please God without Roaring and running Races, will to wante v bits about 1

This was the Godiy and wholesome Disci. pline, invented and instituted by the Pagan Clergy, for the Use and Edification of the deluded and idolatrous World. Action and Outside was all they knew of Religion; and therefore their Superstition took great Delight in building and beautifying Temples. They imagined, that the doing of a Thing which had any Reference to Religion, was actually a Piece of Religion; and that any Jobb of Work about a Holy Place, was, ih 01577

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good Earnest, a Jobb of Holiness. They might have as rationally believed, that Masons, Joyners, and Plaisterers, employed about a Temple, derived Piety and Merit

from that Employment:

Had not Pagan Ceremonies (and Pagans were the first Inventers of Ceremonies) fignified nothing, or rather something very bad, as indeed it was evident to every Eye, that they were either senseless or impious; our Saviour would never have instituted, as he did, a Religion without one Ceremony in it. The Religion of the Gospel is as pure from Fancies and Ceremonies, as from Pride and the Spirit of Dominion.

Our Blessed Saviour knew well, that the crafty and profane Priests, had, by their shameless Inventions and filthy Ceremonies, polluted or abolished all Religion; and therefore, in Mercy to Mankind, founded a Religion without Priests, and without Ceremonies: (as shall be fully shewn hereafter) For, it is to be observed, that while the Established Church of Paganism sourished, Priests and Ceremonies always sourished or increased to-

gether. 1990 doin

Such was the simple Institution of the Gospel: But when Popery began to Elbow out
Christianity, Ignorance and Ceremonies were
some of the Principal Engines by which it
effected the same. For, as the Meekness of
Christians was then converted into the Cruelty of Barbarians, and the Plainness of the
R Gospel

Gofpel into all the detestable Fopperies of Paganism; so Holiness of Heart was changed into Holiness of Posture; the Humility of Soul into bodily Bowings; the Worship of God into the Worship of Bread, and the piping of Organs: And the Clergy, as they had called themselves, were no longer cloathed with Meckness, but with Surplices, &c.

Nor was this mighty Revolution, this unnatural Transition from the Beauty and Gentleness of Christianity, to the unhallowed Spirit and abominable Rituals of the Heathens, at all hard or impracticable: The People had, by the Idleness, Insufficiency, and Debaucheries of the Ecclefiafticks, become corrupt and blind to the last Degree, and therefore ran readily and chearfully into every new Absurdity. Whatever the Bishop pronounced decent, though ever so vile or filly, his conforming Flock received as Reverend and Edifying. A gross and sensual Manner of Worship, suited best with the Grossness of their Understandings, and the Sensuality of their Minds. They had no Conception of the Spiritual Nature of the Gospel, and of that Evangelical Grace, which operates internally, and is wholly employed about the Soul, but produces neither Cringes, nor Dances, nor Grimaces.

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A Religion therefore of Ceremonies, which is no Religion at all, agreed well with those Carnal Christians, who were taught to place all Religion in Ceremonies. When the ignorant

rant Vulgar are once persuaded that Ceremonies are good for any Thing, they come quickly to think them good for every Thing; and the more, the merrier! They are delighted with Shadows and Mystery, and Hocus Pocus. Ignorance, like every other Habit, is daily improving it felf, and encreases in Strength as in Years, it delights to be still plunging into farther and deeper Darkness. The less People understand, the more they stare; and because there is nothing in the Gospel but plain Piety, plain Reason, and plain Matter of Fact; therefore it can raise no Wonderment in them, and confequently no pleasing Piety: But strange and mysterious Ceremonies can do all this; and, for that Reason, have always got the better of Religion in all bigotted Countries.

Here therefore is a glorious and ample Field of Gaping, Sottiffiness, and Credulity, for crafty Priests to play their Tricks, and fow Superstition in. And, indeed, they have topped their Parts, in this Undertaking, with fuch Dexterity and Success, that their humble and refigned Votaries do not any longer pretend to carry their own Eyes or Understanding: Their very Palaces and Noses are Priest-ridden, and dare neither Taste nor Smell, without an Ecclesiastical Licence. Thus even the invincible Operations of the Animal Spirits, and of the Five Senses, must stand still, when commanded by the Priest, who can annihilate the Greature, and create his Creator.

As under the facred Name of God and Religion, the greatest Irreligion and Impieties have been propagated; so, under the Colour and Umbrage of significant and decent Ceremonies, the most ridiculous and immodest Usages have been introduced. It would require more than a whole Paper to expose all the many Apish Gesticulations of the Romish Mass; I shall only run over a few of them.

The Priest, in the Administration of Mass, must wear a white Linnen Garment, which, I suppose, must signify Whiteness; for I cannot see a more obvious Meaning in it. The same was also worn by the primitive Heathen Clergy, when they butchered Bullocks, to

appeale their Deities.

As he approaches towards the Altar, having great Devotion in his Back-Bone, he bows, and bows, and ducks his Head, as if he was playing at Hop-Frog. The Altar is also covered with a Surplice, or white Cloth, which, doubtless, signifies some great Mystery; but, in profane Eyes, typistes only a Damask Table Cloth. It moreover stands towards the East, which, to be sure, has a deep Meaning, and seems to imply, as if God Almighty was either more merciful or more powerful in that Quarter of the World, (though he made it All) than in any of the other Three; or as if he liked that Climate best, and All those who bow to it.

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He then, after many Monkish Gestures and Scrapings, says a world of short Prayers, (the

(the whole Service being judiciously sliced into pretty little Morfels of Devotion) and reads Scraps of Scripture; all which Prayings and Readings would not be half fo Wholefome any where else as they are just at the Elbow of the Altar. Then there is a lighted Candle standing by him at Noon-Day, prohably to fignify that there is Light enough without it. Now, in some other Churches, the Altar is only illuminated with dark Candles, which, for ought I know, may be equally mysterious and significant. But, upon this great and essential Point, I shall pro-

nounce nothing dogmatically.

The Priest then mutters Words over the Bread and Wine, which thereupon start into omnipotent Flesh and Blood; and the living Jesus is swallow'd Whole, in Remembrance of the dead One; and the Priest makes his Maker, and the People eat him. The Wine, which the Priest very naturally keeps all to himself, must not be poured out of a Bottle into a Glass, which would not be significant enough; but out of a Flaggon, which, being of Silver or Gold and holding more Liquor, is consequently very significant. He repeats, Lord have Mercy upon us, very often, to signify that he does it more than once; and speaks loud, to signify, that he may be heard.

But I am quite fick of this strange significant Sruff, before I have gone thro' the Tenth Part of it. The whole Performance is perfectly

ly Theatrical, and improperly and impioufly called a Sacrament. It is indeed a wretched, unentertaining Interlude; a stupid Farce, of which the Priest is the Chief Mimick; for Mumbling and making Mouths, does not de-

ferve the Name of Acting.

We have had several Attempts made to revive a mongst us this infamous Mummery in Devotion, and these Apish Ceremonies; which are an Affront to Common Sense, and below the Dignity of Human Nature, much more of Religion: But such Attempts can never succeed, while we enjoy either Liberty or Knowledge. Archbishop Land, therefore, when he had bewitched the Court, sway'd the Scepter, and destroy'd the Liberty of the People and of the Press, took the best Opportunity he could get, to transport Rome to Lambeth; and having married the Harlot, he adopted her Trumpery.

A Sample of this Man's Genius for Popery may be seen in his mad Manner of Consecrating some New Brick and Mortar which had been used in the Repair of St. Catharine Creed-Church, London; as the same is related at large by Rushworth. At his Approach to the West End of the Church, the Doors slew open, upon pronouncing certain Words out of the Psalms, That the King of Glory might enter; and then entered the Bishop, and falling down upon his Knees, Baptiz'd the Ground, or, which is the same Thing, pronounced it Holy, in the Name of the Father,

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Son, and Holy Ghost. Then he threw Dust in the Air, and play'd some other pious Pranks. Then he pronounced many Curses, and called upon the People to Curse with him. Then he scatter'd aBasket-full of Blessings amongst all the Masons, and other Holy Mechanicks, who had helped to make that Church sine. He also went round the Church in Procession, and told God Almighty and the People, over and over, that that was Holy Ground. At last, after a Bead-Roll of Prayers, and a Hundred and Fifty Bowings, and after many wild Gestures, sometimes advancing, sometimes recoiling, like One affrighted and erazy, he gave the Sacrament.

Besides all this, he removed the Communion-Table, and placed it in the Chancel Altar-wise, contrary to the express Direction of the Rubrick; which says, it shall stand where Morning and Evening-Prayer is directed to be said. He made Pictures of the Trinity, and caused them to be hung up in Churches; and was guilty of many other Popish Innovations, all tending to create

Fanaticism and Superstition.

This Paper grows too long, and leaves me no Room to do Justice to Crosses, Square-Caps, and Fantastical Garments: all which, I warrant you, are profoundly Mysterious; tho to Carnal Eyes, they seem only to signify to make the People stare: For every odd Sight strikes the Imagination, and disposes the Beholder either to Laughter or Reverence.

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Nor have I Time to honour with a proper Encomium, that Ingenious and Ecclefiastical Device, of explaining the fublime Mystery of the Trinity by a Pair of Compasses, tho' it is above all Explication, and even of Conception, unless thro' Faith; and of representing the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, by a Triangle in a Circle, over the Communion-Table. Was there ever fuch a pretty Piece of pious Cunning! By the faid Triangle is typify'd and held forth to us, that the faid Triangle confifts of Three Angles; which is exceeding plain and edifying: And by the Circle is fignified, that the faid Circle is but One Circle, which is prodigious good again! But, that a Triangle is a Circle, and a Circle is a Triangle, Dr. Waterland faith not.

I must, for the same Reason, pass over unobserved, the Praising of God with Organs, which our Homilies very uncivilly call Superstitious; Cuts in the Common-Prayer Books, tending to prepare People for Idolatry; and Pictures in Churches, for the same

This Paper grows too leng, and dayes me no Room to do Judice to Caulity SquaresCans, and Fantalical Gameters; all which,

the to Carnal Eyes, they seem only to leady of an order to reake the Feonle flares for every odd Sight strikes the Langingrion, and disposes the Evagingrion Reverance.

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NUMBER XXXIII.

Wednesday, August 31. 1720.

The Ignorance of the High-Church Vulgar, and its Caufes.

Have always thought the best constituted Church in the World to be that, which forms and produces the most religious and most rational

Members. Churches are Places where Men are, or should be, taught the Love of God, and of Vertue; and when People have been long used to perform divine Discipline, and, as they imagine, receive Instruction in Moral and Evangelical Duties, in these stately Fabricks, they generally conceive a deep Reverence and Devotion for the Buildings themselves, and for every Thing that is said in the them, as well as a great Opinion of the Wisdom and Sanctity of the Teachers, who preside there, and dictate ex Cathedra: They

esteem them as Persons sent by God himself, to deliver a Message from his own Mouth; for which also they have often the Word of the Preacher—No small Reason to the many

for the believing of it!

So that here is an uncontroulable Prepoffession in Favour of every Doctrine, or every
Dream, which corrupt Priests shall think sit
to deliver. And indeed, the High Church
Clergy have never failed to make their
Advantage of this superstitious Awe and
Credulity of their Hearers; and to sanctify every Falshood, and every Whimsey and
Impiety uttered by them, with a misapply'd
or preverted Text of Scripture; and so proftituted and prophaned the high and holy
Name of God, to patronize their Impostures.

I shall give some Instances.

When they have had a Mind to flatter a a cruel or a foolish Prince, in order to make him serve their Purposes, and do their Drudgery; they have dubbed him instantly God's Vice-gerent, tho' he acted at the same Time by the Instigation of his Lust or of Saran. And, because David and Saul, being appointed by God himself, by Word of Mouth, were called the Lord's Anointed; therefore every Tyrant, who was not appointed by God himself, but seized a Crown by Violence or Surprize, became also the Lord's Anointed. And because Adam was the Father of his own Son, therefore he was the King of his own Son; and therefore all such Kings,

who

who had not Adam for their Father, were neverthelefs, in Right of Adam, Kings and Fathers of their Subjects, who yet were not their Children, but for all that owed them the Duty of Children, whilst they were plundering and ruining them; and all the Rapine and Murthers they were prompted to commit, by their Anger or their Avarice, were called the Ordinances of God, and were to be submitted to, with Christian Stupidity, on pain of Damnation; that is, it was made Damnation to refift Actions and Cruelties which deferved Damnation: And as you were to submit to Law and Justice, on pain of Damnation, fo ought you to fubmit to the overturning of all Law, and all Justice, on pain of Damnation alfo. And, because when we have any Marter of Complaint, we are bid to acquaint the Church with it; therefore the People, who are the Church, are, in every Cafe, to be determin'd by the Parson of the Parish, who is not the Church. And, because we are to confess our Sins one to another; therefore we are to do it to a Priest, which is not doing it to one another. And because Abraham gave the Tenth of his Plunder to Melchifedeck, who was not a Priest of our Church by Law Establish'd; therefore our Establish'd Priests, who have nothing to do with Melchifedeck, nor know any thing of him, have a Divine Right to the Tenth Part of every Man's Effare and Industry. And, as the Tribe of Levi had a Right to Tythes, tho' they

and their Tythes are long fince abolished; fo ought our Parsons to have the same Tythes by the Gospel, without being in the least akin to Aaron's Person, or Heirs to his Estate, or Successors to his Institution. And, though our Saviour's Kingdom is not of this World; yet the Kingdom of the High Clergy, who, if you will take their Words for it, are his Representatives, is, and ought to be, of this World. And, because the reprobate and gluttonous Monkshad, by endless Rogueries, and diabolical Lies, plundered the deluded Laity of their Possessions, and engrossed to themselves most of the Lands of England; therefore our modern High Priests have a natural and hereditary Right to enjoy the same; And, tho' they have, upon Oath, renounced all Power, and all Pretence to Power, but what the Law vouchsafes to grant them; yet they have a Power independent on the Law, and Principles independent on these very Oaths, tho' renounced by these very Oaths.

All these, and many more Absurdities, equally vile and impudent, have been blasphemously father'd upon Scripture, and the Author of Scripture; tho' they all contradict the Scripture, as well as they do common Sense and common Honesty. But as the Vulgar do always take that to be the highest Point of Religion, about which their Teachers make the most Noise, for the Time being, whether it be Tythe, or Dr. Sacheverel, or the Pretender, or the late Duke of Ormond,

Ormond, or King Charles the First; so vicious and corrupted Clergymen, on their Part, have always tacked the Name of God, or, which is much more powerful with the Mob, the Name of the Church, to any Assertion, or any Claim, or any Invention of theirs, be in ever so monstrous or mischievous; and instantly it becomes, with weak People, an Article of Faith, upon which Salvation it self depends. For, as it is their first Care, to force a Testimony from Heaven for every Whim, or Forgery of theirs; so their next Concern is, to make every Contradiction and

Opposition to it, damnable.

Hence it comes to pass, that the same Vertues are not of the same Importance at all Times; but Vertues are made Vices, and Vice is made Vertue, just as the present Temper, or the present Views prevail; and, by corrupt Priests, Things are often taught under the Name of Christianity, which are opposite to the Nature of Christianity: Religion is pretended, and Power meant. In consequence of this, Duty is converted into Sin, and Sin into Duty. Thus, the worshipping of God according to one's Conscience, without which there can be no Worship, is made by the High Church Priests a damnable Sin; and the not worshipping a Table in the Chancel, tho' in Opposition to one's Conscience, is as bad. Sometimes the resisting of unlawful Power, is certain Damnation; and fometimes the not rebelling against

gainst the most lawful Power, has the same terrible Penalty annexed to it. To doubt or deny their uncharitable, unintelligible Explications of Mystery, which cannot be explained, is the most heinous Atheism; and to whip a seditious, forsworn Priest, is crying Insidelity, and a Wound to Christ, through

the Sides of his Ambassador.

At one time, Predestination is of high Con-Sequence, and made an Article of Faith, and all Free-Willers shou'd be banished the Land, or locked up in Dungeons, like wild Beafts; which was the Judgment of the Bishops in King Fames the First's Days, concerning the Arminians. At a different Season, when Preferments run high on t'other side, as in King Charles the First's Reign, and ever fince; Arminianism not only recovers Credit, but grows modifi, and confequently Orthodox; while Predestina. tion becomes an old fashioned Piece of Faith, and a fure Sign of Fanaticism; and yet it continues one of the 39 Articles, and yet it must not be believed, and it must be figned and affented to with a fincere Affent.

In all these Marches and Counter-marches, the Passions of too many of the People keep Place with those of the High Priests; and they are constantly disposed to be Slaves or Rebels, Free-Willers, or no Willers, Believers of this, or Believers of that, ljust as Almighty High Church commands them.

Such Men do not pretend to teach their People the Meekness of Christianity:—No, their

their Zeal is to be Anger, and their Religion Cruelty. That Fierceness, which is inconfistent with the Spirit of a Christian, is to be the certain Criterion of one whom they call a true Churchman; and that Mercy. which is inseparable from the Gospel, is inconfistent with the Temper of High Church. Their Votaries are not taught to be Christians, which wou'd spoil the Project, but High Churchmen; and inflead of an Army of Martyrs, they are to be an Army of Martyrmakers: Nor is any Portion of Knowledge fit for them; for That might lendanger the Loss of their Vassalage; and the teaching them to know for themselves, might extinguish their Zeal, and entirely change their Belief and Behaviour. The poor People are, in short, by fuch Guides taught to be ignorant, and to let others know for them: They must give up common Sense, to learn their Duty; and abandon Christianity, without which they cannot have the Grace of God, to embrace rigid Conformity, which is neither a Sign, not a Caufe of that Grace, but often a Bar and a Contradiction to it. This is fo true, that whoever can reconcile Human Authority to Christian Charity, may reconcile Water and Fire, or do any other Impossibility bound bloods vod before e

Tenderness and Moderation to those who devoutly differ from us, though they are evident Principles and Duties of Christianity, and even the Result of Reason, Justice, and

Humanity, yet are never mentioned by the Mouth of Orthodoxy, but as Terms of Contempt or Reproach: Infomuch, that a pious Indulgence to Men of a different Communion, the most honest, virtuous, inoffenfive Men; and an Indulgence for the invincible, and perhaps rational Perswasions of the Mind, is the common Butt of Satire, and either ridiculed or reviled; whilst Men of the fame Side may go what Lengths they will in Violence and Villany, without Anger or Rebuke: And while one Man shall have his House burned, his Brains beat out, and his Family ruined, for having a scrupulous Conscience, which is much more offensive than none at all; another Man shall break all the Ten Commandments with Reputation.

Hatred and Bitterness of Spirit, are the first Lessons which the unhappy People are taught by fuch Men; and the Gospel must be laid aside, and good Nature be extinguish'd, before modern Orthodoxy can be swallowed, or modern Zeal infused. Some of them may probably have learned to repeat the Catechism by Rote, and even to have practis'd profound Respect and Submission to their Spiritual Superiors; but for the great and indispensable Duties of Religion, how can it be expected they should mind them, while they daily fee their Teachers express a much more warm Concern for their own Dignities and Revenues, than for the Honour and Interest of pure unmix'd Religion, which was

ever

ever highest when Ecclesiastical Power and

Ecclefiaftical Excise were lowest.

When a Congregation fees the Doctor much warmer against Dissenters, than against Sin, and not half so zealous for the absolute Necessity of a virtuous and sober Life, as for the absolute Necessity of a rigid Conformity; what can they conclude, but either that he banters them, or that a stupid Compliance with him, and a raging Refentment against Nonconformists, are the great Duties of Churchmen? Add to this, that if his Life be vicious, fuch a Conclusion is still the more natural to vulgar Understandings. When they fee Church Power fo violently contended for, and Gospel Holiness so lirtle regarded, or so easily dispensed with; what can their stupid Understandings infer, but that a blind Submission to the Ecclesiasticks, is beyond all Evangelical Grace, and every Moral Virtue? They find by daily Experience, that they may commit Drunkenness or Whoredom, with Impunity, or a small Expence; but if they do not give the Doctor what he calls his Due, even to the last Sheaf of Corn, or the last Pound of Wool, they are expos'd in the Pulpit, harraffed in the Bishops Court, and probably, at last, furrendered to Saran and Damnation.

Besides, they oftner hear Texts quoted, in some Pulpits, to abuse Separatists, than to recommend Godliness and Vertue; and see the Mode of performing a Duty more ve-

hemently

hemently urged, than the Dury it self: Thus kneeling at the Lord's Supper, is made by many of equal Importance with the Sacrament it self; and the Cross in Baptism must no more be parted with, than the Ordinance

of Baptism.

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It is therefore no wonder that the Affections and Antipathies of the common People, have neither proper Causes nor proper Objects, and that they neither love the Gofpel as fuch, nor hate Sin as fuch; but form their Faith and Devotion upon the Word and Behaviour of their Priests, who have the keeping of their Religion, their Zeal, and their Passions; and what hopeful Use they make of this terrible Dominion, we all know: For indeed the Christian Religion is not so much as known to the High Church Vulgar, nor fuffered to be known; and as little do they feel, or are suffered to feel, the tender Impulses of good Nature and Humanity, but possess an Implacableness of Spirit, as opposite to the Spirit of Christ, as was the Spirit of Mahomet to that of Mofes.



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NUMBER XXXIV.

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Wednesday, September 7. 1720.

Of FASTING.

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N my 27th Paper, I have made a Differtation upon Fasting; in this I shall continue it.

Monsieur de Fontenelle, in his History of Oracles, tells us, from Philostratus, that the Oracle of Amphiaraus in Atticated deliver'd its Answers in Dreams; and that those who consulted it, must first fast well, in order to dream well: But when Fasting failed to produce a Phrenzy of Brain, and by it the Meaning of the God, who had no other Way of ascending into the Head, but upon the Fumes arising from empty Bowels; then the Priest helped his Master to bring forth a Dream, by wrapping up the devout Querist in the Skins of Victims, which being rubb'd and impregnated with intoxicating Drugs, disposed him to dream most divinely, and

and fill'd his Noddle with very hopeful Ptophecy. This fatisfy'd the believing Querist, faved the Credit of the God, and brought

pretty Offerings to his Vicar.

Such Use did the Pagan Priests make of the Duty of Fasting; and that the Romisto Priests have perverted it to as wicked and deceiful Purposes, I have shewn in another Paper. It is agreeable to their Curning and their Avarice, to make the People poor and mad; and it must be own'd a presty priestly Art, that of driving Men out of their Estates and their Understandings with their own Consent; and leading them into a Belief, that Starving is a Duty, and Lunacy is Grace.

By the Law of Nature, we are not obliged to fast at all, unless in the Way of Phylick, when we are ill, thro an Overfulness of the Vessels, or any other Diforder, which may be removed or leffened by Abstinence. In this Cale, we ought to fast for our Health fake; and whatever is necessary for Self-Relief, or Self-Prefervation, becomes also a Duty, and a Piece of Natural Religion, when it does not contradict a positive Law of God. But to abstain, upon certain Days, from the comfortable Use of God's good Creatures, which ought to be received with Thankfulness, out of a vain Pretence to please Him, or to promote our own Salvation, is a strange and barbarous Chimera, which the Law of Nature abhors; and can be the Effect of nothing

thing but Distraction in the People, or Crast in the Priests. We might as rationally imagine, that going naked at certain severe Seasons of the Year, would draw us nearer Heaven; and that the afflicting our Skins with Frost and Snow, would do great Service to our shivering Souls; and that the Self-Preservation be an essential Law of Nature, yet Self-Destruction is also an essential

Law of Nature.

Fasting, therefore, being no Part of the Law of Nature, the Jewish Law of Ceremonies, which is abolished, cannot make it a Duty: And for the Examples of Fasting, taken from the Prophet Daniel, and other Holy Men of the Old Testament; they were either voluntary, such as any one may perform when he is in a fasting Humour, which no Body pretends to restrain; or they were the Essect of Sorrow, when Grief had destroyed Appetite, and then there was no Devotion in them; or they were extraordinary and supernatural, and being inimitable, cannot be necessary. Miraculous Fasting cannot be a Duty, where the Gift of Miracles is not given.

As to the New Testament, there is not a stared Fast appointed in it: We are indeed commanded to fast and pray; but we are no where told how much, or how often, we are to do either; but are lest to choose proper Occasions, and proper Inclinations, for doing both. St. Paul is such a generous Advo-

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cate for Liberty of this Kind, that he condemns all those who condemn others for taking
it. Let not, says he, him that eateth, despife him that eateth not: And let not him
which eateth not, judge him that eateth: for
God hath received him. One Man esteemeth
one Day above another: Another esteemeth
every Day alike. Let every Man be fully
perswaded in his own Mind. (Rom. Ch. xiv.
v. 3 and 5.) The same Spirit of Charity,
and the same good-natur'd rational Advice,
runs thro' the whole Chapter.

The Institution of Lent was founded upon our Saviour's Fast of Forty Days in the Wilderness; as if weak impotent Mortals could imitate the Omnipotent Son of God, in Works done but by divine Power! They might as well pretend to walk upon the Sea once a Year, or to raise the Dead at all Times: Besides, our Saviour perform'd this Fast but once, and his Apostles never, as far as we know. Once a Twelve-month you must keep Lent, is not a Gospel Pre-

cept.

No Society, therefore, of Men can enjoyn any Time, or Measure, of Fasting (except where the Law directs the same) without departing from the Gospel, and contradicting St. Paul, and setting up their own Authority in Desiance of both the Gospel and the Saint. Such an Injunction would be impracticable, and even cruel. To many Constitutions it might be dangerous, and even fatal; and to all

all Men, it would render Life wretched and burthensome. The good God has no where commanded frail Men to worship him with Pain and Sickness of Body, nor to hasten their own Death by the Means of their Devotion. This would be to represent him as delighting in human Misery, and human Sacrifices; a fort of Worship suitable to the terrible Spirit of Moloch, or any other Damon, but no wife acceptable to the God of Mercy, and the God and Father of our Lord

Fefus Christ.

The Popish Priests know well, that it is intirely impossible that all Men should comply with this their Discipline of Hunger, and perhaps that very Impossibility is their best Reason for maintaining it. It is certain that from hence they draw vast Gain, by hiring out Dispensations for Eating on the Days of Fasting; and the Lucre they make by breaking the Canon, is an unanswerable Argument for defending it. No Man is denied the Privilege of breaking Lent, who can pay for breaking it. He who cannot fast at all, may, for a competent Fee, eat Fish, which is a more luxurious Diet than Flesh; and he who cannot fast upon Fish, may, for a more competent Fee, fast upon a Belly-full of Roaft-Beef; which, tho' a chaster Sort of Food than Fish, is more strictly forbidden by that Church.

Indeed, fuch are the vast Fees arising to the Popish Church, from Licences for a Liberty

berty to eat, when it is a Dury to fast, that the whole Institution of Fasting there, seems only a religious Roguery, design'd for starying the People, to feed the Priefts. For my felf. I think the Parson has so little to do with this Matter, that I do not think any Direction ought to be taken about Fasting, but from our Constitution, or our Physician. If it be our Duty to fast on certain Days, no Tribe of Priests can dispense with the Pleafure and the Laws of Almighty God; tho' it is a Task which (for Money) they never refule: And if it be not our Duty, it is infolent and wicked in them to command what neither God nor Nature requires; and it is in us a Sin and a Folly to obey them. Even the Protestant Priests, long since the Reformation, have known how to make the right Use of this Power. I my felf have feen feveral formal Dispensations, figned by Archbishop Sheldon, under the Archi-Episcopal Seal, to Licence the eating of Flesh in Lent; which Dispensations, I prefume, were not granted without Application and Fees, not a not arem, he as ilst

Religion is a voluntary Thing; it can no more be forced than Reason, or Memory, or any Faculty of the Soul. To be devout against our Will, is an Absurdiry; and it is ridiculous in others to hope to make us so, in Spite of our selves. We have no Power over the Appetites of others, no more than over their Consciences. Neither a Man's Mind, nor

his

his Palate, can be subject to the Jurisdiction of another; and whoever takes upon him to regulate one's Throat and Stomach, and direct one how much to swallow, may (with equal Reason) assume Dominion over the other Offices of Nature, and dictate how much one ought to discharge. If Fasting is good and pious, because it afflicts and mortises the Human Spirit and Frame; a Surfeit, or a Debauch, or a Kick on the Guts, or a broken Leg, must be good and pious, for the same Reason, if given or taken with

the fame View.

As Fasting ought to be left to every Man's Discretion, because every Man is the best Judge of his Constitution and his Conscience. fo ought it to be exercised with exceeding Care and Caution; otherwife it will be apt to four our Tempers, or diforder our Heads. and probably do both. Now, neither Ill-Nature, nor Enthusiasm, is any wife related to true Religion; far otherwise, they are the greatest Enemies it has. A bitter Spirit, and a raying Brain, may be occasioned or increased by Fasting; but Christianity neither produces them, nor owns them. We may fast our selves into Peevishness and call it Christian Zeal; and into the Vapours, and call the Wind in our Heads, Inspiration: But, by all this, we only shew that we know nothing, at least possess nothing, either of Inspiration or Zeal. ic much checkers make his

But this same immoderate Fasting does not only render People whimfical and paffionate, and has confequently helped to give Birth to many ridiculous and uncharitable Principles of Divinity, which have infatuated and enflamed Mankind; but it also creates narrow Thoughts, and an abject Poorness of Spirit; and renders the Mind prone to Delufion and Slavery. It is manifest, that a moderate Use of the Bleffings and Enjoyments of Life, of which Eating and Drinking are not the least, has a wonderful Tendency to create or improve a good and beneficent Difpolition of Heart; which, in my Opinion, is as absolutely necessary to Devotion, as to good Neighbourhood. I can never think that Ill-Nature, or Baseness of Mind, can be an acceptable Oblation to the Wife and Merciful God; or that Religion shou'd command what common Sense forbids. I must own, I am always best pleas'd after a good Meal, and therefore best dispos'd to love God and my Neighbour, which is the Sum of both Tables: I feel, at the same Juncture, the Love of Liberty, and the Spirit of Whiggism, strongest in me. And if Eating and Drinking makes us thus bold for our Constitution, let us, we befeech you, in the Name of publick Spirit, promote moderate Eating and Drinking.

It is a Principle in Politicks, that a Happy People will never bear a Tyrannical Prince: He must therefore make his Subjects

jects wretched, before he can make himself absolute. And this Principle holds equally true, in the Business of Church Dominion. The Laity must be Fools, before they can think the Priests to be Oracles; and they must be Slaves, before they can think the Priests to be Lords. Here then is an unanswerable Reason, taken from the standing Rules of Ecclefiastical Polity, why the Lay Beafts of the People, as Mr. Lefley kindly calls us, should be always kept fenfeless, always starving. I would therefore entreat all my loving Countrymen, that, as they love their Liberty and the Protestant Religion, they would love their Victuals.



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NUMBER XXXV.

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Wednesday, September 14. 1720.

Of REASON.

EASON is the only Guide given to Men in the State of Nature, to find out the Will of God, and the Means of Self-preservation. The Senses are its subordinate Instruments and Spies: They bring it Intelligence; and it forms a Judgment, and takes Measures, according to the Difcoveries which they make. It compares Things one with another, and chooses them, if they are good; or neglects them, if they are indifferent; or shuns them, if they are bad. It discovers a first Cause, the Maker, Contriver, and Preserver of all Things; and therefore it teaches Submission to his Will, Admiration of his Wisdom and Power, and Thankfulness for his Goodness and Mercy. It distinguishes Subjects from 10 (8) 40 TV Slaves ;

Slaves; and shews the Loveliness of Liberty, and the Vileness of Vassalage: It shews that, as to political Privileges, all Men are born equal; and consequently, that he who is no better than others, can have no Right to command others, who are as good as himself; unless for the Ends of their own Interest and Sasety, they confer that Right upon him, during their good Pleasure, or his good Behaviour.

REASON has invented all Science, pointed out all Commerce, and framed all Schemes for focial Happiness. It has polithed Mankind, set the Greeks above the Barbarians, and the Romans above the Greeks. It has been observed, in Praise of its great Power and Excellency, by a celebrated Moralist, that we have not sufficient Strength to follow our Reason as far as it would car-

ry 215.

To REASON we are beholden for all the Comforts and Conveniencies of Life, next after the first Author of them; and for our Desence against the Assaults of Beasts of Prey, and of one another; and for our Shelter from the Inclemencies of uncertain Weather, freezing us, or scorching us, according to the different Seasons of the Year. The Earth, with all its Abundance, assorbed but rude and unpleasing Entertainment, without the Dexterity and Resinements of Reason. Thus, even the Gifts of Nature, before they arrive at us, and are made fit for our Use, become

become also the Gifts of REASON. Without REASON, we had lived like the Brute Creation, upon raw Fruit, tasteless Herbs, and the cold Spring, or exposed to the merciless Jaws of Famine, when a severe Winter had frozen up the Stores, of the Earth, and

locked the Waters under Ice.

REASON checks tumultuous Passion, the greatest Enemy to the Peace of the Mind, and to the Peace of Society. Hence it has been observed, by the same Moralist, that all our rational Pursuits are temperate Pursuits; and that what we purfue with REASON, we never purfue with Violence. REASON fubdues Anger. and prevents Cruelty; it makes a Man less fierce than a Lyon, and less ravenous than a Bear. It is not human Shape, but human Reason, that places a Man above the Beast's of the Field, and lifts him into a Refemblance with God himself. Hence it is justly Stiled Divina particula Aura; A Ray, or Impulse of the Divinity. And, in what Sense can a Man be said to be made after the Image of God, unless by his possessing that REA-SON, which is a divine Particle of the GODHEAD? We resemble not our MAKER in Person or Complexion; and therefore can only refemble him in REAson, and in Mercy, which is the Child of this Divine Reason.

Were we not rational Creatures, we could not be religious Creatures, but upon a Level with Brutes, to whom God has made no Re-

Discount!

Revelation of himself, because they want Reason to discern it, and to thank him for it. Revelation therefore presupposes Reason, and addresses it self to Reason; and God himself, by perswading us, as he does in his Word, by the Voice of Reason, appeals to our Reason. We cannot glorify God but with our Understandings; and we are convinced of his Goodness before we adore it. To praise him, without Reason, is a Contradiction, and an Impossibility. The Devotion which he requires, must be free, rational and willing; and where it is not so, it is Folly or

Hypocrify.

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Nor is there any Opposition between Reafon and Grace, whatever fome may weakly, or dishonestly, maintain. In Truth, Grace is never given, but where Reason was already given; and the former cannot subsist, where the latter does not. We may have worldly Wisdom without Piety; but cannot possess Piety without Understanding; nor does Grace, tho' given in the greatest Abundance, at all fupply the ordinary Offices of Reason. We do not find that St. Luke was a better Physician, for having written a Gospel; or St. Paul a better Sailor, or better Tent-Maker, for being an Apostle. But neither could St. Luke have been an Evangelist, nor St. Paul an Apostle, unless God had given them Reason as well as Grace. Indeed they are both the Gifts of God; only the One is ordinary, and the Other is extraordinary.

REASON

REASON, even without the Light of Revelation, teaches us to investigate Nature. and praise God for the Wonderfulness of his Works. It must judge of Revelation it felf, what is fo, and what not; and of the Words and Language, in which the Holy Oracles were at first convey'd; and of the Words and Language into which they were afterwards translated. Now Words, many of them, being obscure or equivocal, and signifying different Things to different Men, it is left to our Reason to determine, in what Sense these Words are to be understood. The Spirit of God has invented for us no new Ones, or such as carry in their Sound certain and determinate Ideas, which cannot be mistaken, but must infallibly be the same to every Man.

By the Light of REASON we see about us. It warns us against Crast, and arms us against Force; and the same Reason, which commands us to believe in God implicitly, and obey him passively, does also command us to trust to no Man without Inquiry, and to submit to no Man without Cause. Thus, what is our Duty in Relation to God, would be Madness in Relation to one another: The good GOD cannot deceive us; but MEN have Pride, Folly, Interest and Complexion, all conspiring to deceive themselves and others.

Our first Attempt to make Converts, is an Appeal to their REASON, by which they are to judge for themselves of the Reasonableness of our Religion, and of the Arguments

ments which we bring for the Defence and Recommendation of our Religion: Which Method would be exceeding abfurd and difhonest, if we did not suffer them to judge of our Religion with the same Freedom, after they are come into it, as they did before they embraced it. This would be Trepanning one's Reason into Captivity, with its own Assistance; first to make use of it, and then to vote it useless: A strange inconsistent Piece of Treachery, and a flat Contradiction to that Liberty with which CHRIST has made us free! As if we were to receive any System upon the Grounds of our Reason, without which it never can be fincerely receiv'd, and then to reject our Reason upon the Grounds of our System!

Pray, how do we distinguish the Beauty and Truth of the Cospel, from the Imposture and Absurdicy of the Alchoran, but by our Reason? How do we detect the impudent and senseless Doctrine of Transubstantiation; but by our Sense and Reason? Why did we, or how could we, leave Popery, and embrace the Reformation, but because our own private Reason told us; and Scripture. of which we made our selves the Judges, told us; that we left Slavery, Falshood, and Cruelty, for Truth, Freedom and Innocence? How did our Saviour prove himself the Son of God, but by Miracles, which every Eye faw, and every Ear heard? He appealed to the Sense and Reason of Mankind; and all La Harft

were convinced, that would be convinced. How do we know the Scripture to be the Word of God, but by the Deductions and Information of Reason? How can we prove our own Church, as by Law established, to be the purest and best constituted Church in the World, but by the Testimony of impartial, disinterefted REASON? For, it is plain, from the great Number of Gain-fayers, and Arians, that her genuine Sons have not the miraculous Gift of inspiring, from above, all Men with their own Orihodox Sentiments. How can we distinguish Religion from Enthusiasm; Grace from Superstition; Faith from Credulity; the Love of the Church from the Love of Power; and the Authority of God from the Impositions of Men; but by Reafon, or by the Scripture, interpreted by Reason ? as thou As and Lively of the C

In short, all who are Friends to TRUTH, are Friends to REASON, the Discoverer and Champion of TRUTH; and none are Foes to Reason, but those who have Truth and Reason for their Foes. He, who has dark Purposes to serve, must use dark Means: Light would discover him, and Reason expose him: He must endeavour to shut out both; and make them look frightful, by giving them ill Names; for farther than

Names the Vulgar inquire not.

From this Cause, Religion and Liberty flourish, where *Reason* and Knowledge are encouraged; and where-ever the latter are stiffed,

stifled, the former are extinguished. In Turkey, Printing is forbid, Enquiry is dangerous, and Free speaking is CAPITAL; because they are all inconsistent with the MAHO-METANISM by Law established. Hence it comes to pass, that the wretched Turks are all stupidly ignorant, are all Slaves, all Infidels. Nor have the Papifts much Advanrage to boast above the Mahometans. Their Guides and Governors lock up from them the Scripture, which is the Book of Knowledge: They teach them, that Ignorance is the Mother of Devotion: They banish Liberty, they brow-beat Reason, they persecute Truth. In Consequence of all which, the deluded Votaries of the Romish Church are as ignorant as the Mahometans, as great Slaves, greater Idolaters, and greater Persecutors; that is, they exceed the Turks in their Barbarity, who exceed most others.

Here, in England, why are we free, why Protestants; but because we are guided by Reason, and judge for our selves? And none amongst us complain of the Liberty of the Press, or the Growth of Free-Thinking, but those who would found a Dominion upon Stupidity and Persecution. Vile and Wosul is that Cause, which must be supported by Ignorance and Misery! And yet there are those in Great-Britain, who, tho they wear a holy and venerable Livery, yet have the Boldness and Blasphemy to christen that impious Cause, the Cause of God and of his Church.

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To conclude; Scripture and Reafon, without which Scripture can have no Effect, are the only Tests of every Falshood and Impofture, and every Superflicion. Suppose, for Example, a Reverend Doctor is touched with an odd Zeal for Bowing to the Eaft; he ought to convince my Reafon that Bowing. to the East is enjoined in Scripture, before he enjoins me to bow also. If he fays, it is enjoined by the Authority of the Church; he then must facisfy my Reason; that the Scripture teaches the Church to teach her Members to make Bows. If he answers, that neither does the Scripture reach to bow to the East, but that the Church thinks Bowing decent and edifying the mustochen prove, by rational Evidence, chara what nevery Church thinks decent is a Ducyco If he replies, that this is only true of the one Orthodox Church then he must prove that his Church is the Tole Orchodox Church. according to the Rules of the Gofpel. And if the Doctor cannot do this to my Satisfaction, then there will be an End of his Argument for his Ecclefiaffical Bowines.

As we must judge from Scripture what is Orthodoxy; so we must judge from Reason,

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ignorance and Mifery! And yet there are those in Great-Britain, who, the they wear a hely and venerable Livery, yet have the hald will be also be him in the Canje, of God and of his Canje, the Canje of God and of his Canje.

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NUMBER XXXVI.

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Wednesday, September 21. 1720.

Of the Peace of the Church.

apers. I hall at profent confine my felf

T is a shameful Insult upon our Understandings, that of sanctifying the most wicked Purposes and most cruel Actions with the most honest and innocent Names; and yet nothing is more frequently practifed. Thus the worthy Name of RULER shall be prostituted and pronounced aloud, to palliate and even to justify the Barbarities of a TYRANT; and that peaceable Word Obedience shall be forced to fignify an unmanly and unnatural Patience of Servitude. LAWS, which were intended to protect and encourage good Men, and to restrain and punish ill ones, are often perverted into deadly Instruments in the Hands of Robbers and Usurpers, against the Virtuous and the Harmless; and the Means of Preservation are turn'd into Engines of De-T 3 flruction. proud

struction. The Lord's Anointed, which at first was only a Man approved and chosen by God himself to be the Ruler of his People, has been since compelled to mean an over-grown Plunderer, who chose himself to

be a Destroyer of God's People.

These are some Instances of the Abuse of Words in Civil Life. In Religion, the Abuse has been, if possible, still greater; of which I have given already many Proofs, and shall continue to give more in the Course of these Papers. I shall at present consine my self to a Phrase, which is indeed a very good one, but which I have never known applied to a good Purpose in my Time, nor at any Time before; I mean, that of the Peace of the Church.

By the Peace of the Church, when it is taken in a rational and warrantable Sense, I take to be meant no more than this; namely, That any Number of People, who have agreed among themselves upon Terms of religious Communion, thall quietly enjoy the facred Privilege of Meeting together to worship God; and whoever diffurbs them, let his Title or Pretentions be what they will, is a Breaker of the Peace of the Church. Or if any other Society greater than the former, and of longer standing, think fit to be provok'd at this religious Indulgence, and call it a Breach of the Peace of the Church, they bring home the Charge upon themselves; who, by breaking the Peace of the Church, mean only the not fubmitting to their own proud

proud Spirit, which finds Peace only in the Exercise of successful Tyranny. Or if the smaller Society should usurp Dominion over the Thoughts of its own Members, and demand of them a Belief contrary to the Light of their Minds, or a Behaviour contrary to the Dictates and Conviction of their Confciences; they justify the Claims of the greater Society over themselves, and leave themselves without Excuse for having left it.

A Man, who leaves the Communion of any particular Church, does no more break the Peace of that Church, than a Man who leaves the Realm, breaks the Peace of the Realm; or than a Man breaks the Peace of a Family, who, whilft the rest dine upon Flesh, does himself dine separately upon Fish. But he does evidently break the Peace of the Church, who would by Violence keep any one in that Church; forasmuch as, by fo doing, he violates Conscience, which is the Seat and Centre of Religion, there being no Religion where there is no Conscience, and confequently no real Church. He who prays without Book, does not break the Peace of the Church; provided he forces no Body to pray as he prays: But he who would compel others to pray by his Pattern, against their own Liking, does not only break the Peace of the Church, but destroys, as far as he can, its very Essence; because a Church is constituted by the woluntary Devotion performed by Two or Three met together in Christ's

Christ's Name. If it is not voluntary, it is no Devotion; God will be worshipped in Spirit and in Truth; And if it is voluntary, no Man can controul it.

Hitherto, for the most part, the Peace of the Church has been unnaturally made to fignify a blind Submillion to the Dictates of Priests in Matters of Devotion; and a blind Acceptance of all their Schemes, Dreams and Forgeries in Matters of Faith. Now here is no Church at all; but on one hand, the Invention and Imposition of deceitful and tyrannical Men, defacing and mifrepresenting Religion, and wresting it to serve their own wicked Purposes; and, on the other hand, a Tribe of Fools and Slaves, facrificing their Senfes, their Freedom, and their Consciences to Antichrift, and worshipping him, and not God. If one of these groveling Bigots resumes his Eyes and breaks his Fetters, he, forfooth, is a Schifmatick, he breaks the Peace of the Church.

Why will these Men, so famed for being close and crafty, be so plainly shewing us, that by the Church they mean only Themselves; and by the Worship of God, they mean only the Worship of their own Persons and Authority? But they make this manifest, as by a Thousand Instances, so particularly by by this; namely, that the greatest Rebel to God shall find good Quarter, provided he be but a good Subject to them; and the most conscientious Servant of the Living God shall

thall find no Mercy, if he disputes to bend to their Usurpations, and to swallow their Inventions for divine Oracles. It is no matter whether you live like a Christian or no, provided you do not break the Peace of the Church; but if you do, your being a Saint will not atone for it, nor stand you in the least stead.

If I do all I can to please God, I shall certainly please him. Now, if the Clergy had the same View and Design, my pleasing God would also please them. In consequence of this, if I thought my Abode and Communion with them a Sin, it is their Duty to encourage and exhort me to leave them, and to obey God rather than Men. But far from this, the Plea of pleasing God is often no Way of pleasing them; and they seldom fail to damn a Man for those very Actions, by which, through Christ, he shall be savd; namely, deserting Authority for Conscience, and finding out the Truth for himself.

A stupid Servitude to unbounded Dominion, supports the Peace of the Church in some Countries, just as Ignorance, Poverty, and many Dragoons do the Peace of the State

in others.

The breaking of the Peace of the Church, as the same is generally understood by the ignorant People, and always by the ambitious Clergy, is both a rational and a religious Duty, and the best Action a Man can perform. That Man must be as void of Reafon

fon as of Religion, who quarrels with me for having different Faculties from him, and a different Way of conceiving Things. He might with as much Propriety quarrel with me for having a different Complexion, and a different Palate, neither of which is in my own Power.

If I christen my Child without the Sign of the Cross, or a human Form of Words; how do I, by this, break the Peace of the Church or of good Neighbourhood? But he, who oppresses or calumniates me for thus doing my Duty, by discharging my Conscience, commits an Outrage both upon Humanity and Conscience; and not only breaks the Peace of the Church and of Society, but by his Want of Charity declares his Want of Christianity.

If I follow the best Light I can get, I do my Duty; and if I do my Duty, I please God. And who shall dare to tell me, that though I please God, yet I break the Peace of the Church? Would not this be to own, that the Will of God and the Will of the Church are

opposite Things it was I care of spoin

I do not believe, that there are upon Earth two Men who think exactly alike upon every Subject; and yet our different Tastes in Meat, Drink, Building and Dress, make not the least Difference in human Society; nor is it likely they ever will, unless we establish by Law, and tack Preferments to One particular Mode of Eating, Drinking, Building and Dressing; then indeed we may soon expect

expect to fee the establish'd and orthodox Mafon, Cook and Taylor, very zealous and loud for Conformity and Penalties. But at prefent, Ten Men in Ten different Suits, can dine together upon Ten different Dishes, and give Ten different Opinions upon one Piece of Painting or Architecture, without breaking Friendship or good Humour. If indeed they are drunk either with Wine or Zeal, they will be apt to fight about the Church or something elfe: But why Men in their Senses should clamour and quarrel at their Neighbour's particular Conscience, any more than at his particular Palate, no Reason can be assigned, but the Infatuations of Priestcrast operating upon its Brat Bigotry. Is not Conscience dearer to a Man than his Palate or his Fancy in Cloaths? God can receive no Worship that comes not from the Conscience; and he who commands you to follow him against your Conscience, commands you in effect to provoke God out of Complaifance to Man; and rather than do this, I hope it is lawful to break the Peace of the Church. Where the Church quadrates with a Man's Conscience. he will of Courfe comply with the Church: but where it does not, he is in Conscience bound to defert it; otherwise to be a Conformist, he must be a Hypocrite.

Can these Men be Christians, who demand Submission to their Dictates, in Opposition to the Dictates of Conscience, and at the Peril of Salvation; and who, provided you obey them.

them, care not though you mack God? But if they will allow every Man to be fully perfuaded in his own Mind, which is the Apoftle's Rule and Precept, then the Cry of breaking the Peace of the Church, is an

empty knavish Cry.

Indifferent Things in Religion there are none; and therefore the pretended Power of the Ecclesiasticks to impose them, is wicked and ridiculous. If they are indifferent in their own Eyes, why are they imposed? And if they were indifferent in the Eyes of others, no Body would refuse them. But, if I dislike them, they are no longer indisserent to me; and if you lay any Stress upon them, they are no longer indifferent to you. But to oppress, imprison and ruin People for Things allowed to be indifferent, is such a Piece of Impudence, and wanton Cruelty, as cannot be described.

To call any Thing indifferent in Religion, is to own that it has nothing to do with Religion. Now, can any Reason be given why Religion should be interested in that, in which Religion has no Interest. Sure these Men mock us, and would feem to be in Jest, did not their Proceedings, when they have Power, shew them to be terribly in

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If I neglect a Ceremony or a Cringe, which I think a Reproach to Religion and Reason; do I break the Peace of the Church, for thus doing Honour to Religion and Reafon? email:

fon? Or is it not rather an Infult upon Both, and a manifest Breach of Charity, to use me ill for acting upon such righteous and laudable Motives? Do I break the Peace of the Church, in worshipping God after a Manner that I am verily persuaded he will accept? Or do I not rather dishonour him, in using that as Worship which my Mind tells me is no Worship, tho it should be Establish.

ed by Law?

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In Popils and Mahometan Countries, you fee neither true Religion nor the Practice of it; and yet the Peace of the Church there is wonderfully well fecured by great Armies and Capital Penalties. Fire and Sword, Halters and Dungeons, are all employed to protect the Peace of the Church. And in every Nation under the Sun, where the Church enjoys the most profound Peace, the People enjoy the most profound Misery, Ignorance and Slavery. Civil and Religious Liberty are certain Signs of each other, and live and die rogether; but, I believe I may lay it down for a Maxim, that in any Country where there is ne er a Separatift from the Church, there is ne er a Freeman in the States To which Maxim I may venture to add another, namely, that in the Ecclefuffical Style, the PEACE OF THE CHURCH is but another Phrase for the POWER OF THE PRIESTS. - How ought we then to value our hibles.

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Wednesday, September 28. 1720.

The Enmity of the High Clergy to the

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E can never sufficiently admire wand adore the infinite Goodness of God to Mankind, in giving him a perfect Rule or Law for his Direction and Conduct; and delivering it in Books and Scriptures, which are plain and easy in all Things necessary to be known to every one, who shall make a proper Use of his natural Faculties, and not weakly trust a Pope, or some Body like a Pope, for their Interpretation, who will ever have ambitious or other wordly Purposes to serve, by imposing salse and wicked Meanings on those sacred Writings.

How ought we then to value our Bibles, daily to read them, and fearch our felves for those

those Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge; and how jealous should we be of trusting our Temporal and Eternal Happiness to the Judgment and Conduct of others, who, for the most Part, from imbibed Prejudices or worse Designs, represent the most ridiculous, chimerical, absurd, contradictory and immoral Opinions, to be fundamental Articles of

Notwithstanding, such is the Power and crafty Malice of the Popish and popishly affected Clergy, that in most Countries they have either taken the Bible (even on the Pretence of Religion it self) out of the Peoples Hands, or have made it useless there; and such is the senseless Stupidity of the gaping Herd, that they observe not the Injury done them, and not only suffer this worst fort of Robbery, Violence, and Injustice, but kiss the Rod, and esteem themselves to be kindly and religiously dealt with.

In all Popish Countries, before the Reformation, the Bible was lock'd up in the learned Languages; which effectually hindered the People from being acquainted with that Holy Book; the Priest saying, and the poor ignorant Laity believing, That it was Heretical, and the very Foundation of all Heresy and Schism, for the People to read the Bible. Indeed, after the Reformation, some Translations were made of it into the vulgar Languages of particular Popish Countries; but were the People ever the better for it? No such

fuch Matter, I can affure you; for no one was fuffered to read those Translations without a special Licence, which was dangerous to ask for, and cendred a Man Juspected of heretical Prayity and the Priest never granted it but to those, who either would not or could not make any use of it; that is, to fuch as he well know were pre-engaged by strong Prejudices, or stronger Interests, to fayour the facerdocal Powers and who durft not understand the Word of God differently from the Clergy, who called themselves the Church no never elde sile en chartie ded

But in other Popish Countries, and particularly in Spain, the Bible is not extant in the vulgar Tongue, and confequently must be unknown alrogether to the People, who are incapable of reading it even by Licence; which can fearely be called a Privilege loft, confidering how few durst ask, or can ger Licences, who they are that can obtain them, and what Danger they would incur in making a right Use of them.

Especial Care is taken to prevent the Importation of any Translation of the Bible in these Countries and no sooner does any Ship of a Protestant Nation come to Anchor in any Popilin Port, where the Inquisition prevails, but flie is visited and fearth'd natrowly for heretical Books, and particularly for Bibles, by the Officers of that Court, which are immediately carried to the Inquificion, and there burn'd

men.

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The brave old Marshal Schomberg, when he was last at Lisbon, told a Friend of mine, with Tears in his Eyes, That having, when he came ashore there, lest a Dutch Bible (which had been his Grandfather's) upon the Table of his Cabin, it had been carried from the Custom-House to the Inquisition; and that though he had sent to the chief Inquisitor, and had spoke to him himself for it, he had

not been able to recover it.

Let us now approach nearer home, and fee how Protestants are used in respect to reading the Bible. And in order to confider this Matter, I shall premise Two Things. First, That the End and Design of reading the Bible, is to find out the Will of God, or the Meaning God holds forth to us therein, that we may regulate our Belief, and form our Practice thereby. And, Secondly, I premise, That to such reading the Bible, it is requifite that we should not be prejudiced by Education, in behalf of any Fancies; that we should pay no Regard to the Authority of weak and fallible Men; that no Opinions should be imposed on us as Christian Opinions; as for Example, Confubstantiation, Predestination, the peculiar Opinions of Arius or Socinus, and other Doctrines, pretended to be derived from the Word of God; and that no Man should be hurt in his Body, Name or Goods, for understanding the Bible in that Sense which he thinks to have been intended by God, but that we should act, and

and be permitted to act, in this Matter, as we do in understanding another Book : For if fuch Arts, and Crafts, and Force are used to make Men understand the Bible in a Lutheran, Presbyterian, or Socinian Sense, as form Mens Minds to strongly to those Senses, that not a Man in the Countries, where any of those Opinions prevail, does, or dares differ from the Sentiments of the Publick, or hurts himself any way by so doing , that Man is not properly allowed to read the Bible, or to take his Religion from thence, but receives his Religion from his Lutheran, or Presbyterian, or Socinian Prieft, and might as well rake his Religion from a Popula Priest, without using any Bible at all. For what is the difference between taking a Popilh Priest's Word for the Senfe of the Bible, about the Infallibility and Authority of the Pope and the Church, or the Doctrine of Transubstantiation, (which Bible the Priest keeps folely in his own Hands,) and taking a Presbyter's Word, or being influenced by him, as to the Sense of the Bible, in respect to the Dodrines of the Divine Right of Presbyters and Predestination? (which Bible he does, for Form's Sake, put into the Laymens Hand, but keeps the Sense in his own.) If there is any material Difference, it is in this, that the Popilh Priest acts a fair, open and confiftent Part, in denying the Use of the Bible: and that the Presbyter does the fame thing hypocritically; and that the Presbyterian Lay-

Layman makes a more shameful and contradictory Submission to his Presbyter, than a

Popish Layman does to his Priest.

When the Minds of the Youth, and their Passions, are thus engaged in behalf of certain human Compositions; when they are taught to reverence Men, who are hired and paid to maintain those Compositions; are bred up to hate the Persons of Men of other Perswasions, to abhor their Doctrines, and think it matter of just Disgrace to change the Principles of their Education: And when all this is taught as the Dictates of the Holy Scriptures; must they not, under these Prejudices, read the Scriptures, without understanding them ? Is not that Impartiality, which is necessary towards finding out the true Sense of a Book, intirely taken away? And is not a Partiality, which must lead Men to mistake the Sense of a Book, introduced?

But even this is nothing to what those must go through, if they dare to understand the Bible disserently from what is vulgarly understood in the Country where they live: They will be deemed Hereticks; which is supposed to include every thing that is bad in it: It makes every thing appear odious and deformed; dissolves all Friendships, and extinguishes all former kind Sentiments, however just and well deserv'd. And from the time that a Man is deemed an Heretick, 'tis Charity to act against all Rules of Charity. And the more Men

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violate the Laws of God in dealing with him, 'tis in their Opinion, doing God greater Service. And besides being thus put into a Bear-Skin, and made a Scare-Crow; what is called Herefy, undoes Men in their Trades and Callings, subjects them to Ecclesiastical and Civil Profecutions, and deprives them of all Preferments in the Church or State. Whereas a Person who understands the Bible, as he is led by the Nose to understand it, which is for the most part falfly, has not only fair Quarter and Reputation, and all manner of Preferments in Church and State attending him; but may be as lewd as he pleases, provided he has a sufficient Portion of Zeal for his Orthodoxy, or rather for the Orthodox Prieft.

Is it not therefore a mere mock Show, to recommend to Men the reading of the Scriptures; if, when they read them, they must understand them just as their Master, the Prieft, tells them, under the Penalties of all the foregoing Inconveniences, and the foregoing Rewards, which the Prieft, by his Power and Influence, bestows? Bishop Bramhall tells us plainly, (and too many of our modern Divines agree with him) that the promiscuous Licence which Protestants give to all forts to read and interpret the Scripture, is more prejudicial, nay, pernicious, than the over-rigorous Restraint of the Romanists: Which is Protestant Priestcraft with a witness! For, as Mr. Chillingworth most judicioufly

ciously observes, He that would usurp an absolute Lordship and Tyranny over any People, need not put himself to the Trouble and Difficulty of abrogating and difannulling the Laws made to maintain the common Liberty, or of locking them up in an unknown Tongue from the People; for he may compass his own Design as well, if he can get the Power and Authority to interpret them as he pleases; if he can rule his People by his Laws, and his Laws by his Lawyers. Nay, the more expedite, and therefore the more likely way to be successful, is to gain the Opinion and Esteem of the publick and authorized Interpreter of them: For by this means he presses the Laws into his Service, to advance bis Designs; and can, in Accommodation to the Opinion Men have of the Excellency of the Laws contained in the Scriptures, with a fort of Grace, put a Crown on their Head, and a Reed in their Hands, and bow before them, and cry, Hail King of the Jews; and pretend a great deal of Esteem, Respect, and Reverence to them, while he is in a more effectual manner misleading the People about their Meaning, than if he destroy'd the Scriptures themselves, or lock'd them up in an unknown Tongue from the People.



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NUMBER XXXVIII.

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Wednesday, October 5. 1720.

Of Penance and Religious Revellings.

and the Law's into his Service, to advance

Have, in Two former Papers, considered the Nature, Use, and Consequences of Religious Fastings: I shall, in this, enquire a little into the Merits of Penance, and the Devotion of Festivals; a Couple of potent Engines in the Hands of Churchmen.

Joy and Sorrow proceeding, as they do, from certain Causes which necessarily produce them; the one troubles the Imagination, and the other delights it, whether we will or no. They are different Names given to different Operations of the Animal Spirits, which bring to God Almighty no voluntary Worship, and consequently no Worship at all. The same Disorder in the Blood or Nerves, which discovers it self in Sighs and Groans, would, in

in a greater Degree, bring forth Rage and Convultions, which are not the Symptoms of a Gospel-Spirit, but rather the Marks of Spirits dispossess'd in the Gospel, under Trouble, or in the Spleen, are too apt to mistake their bodily or mental Disorders for the Workings of Divine Grace; as if the wife and mild Spirit of God delighted to play childish and mischievous Pranks with weak and unhappy Men, by filling them with wild Freaks or cruel Agonies. I doubt there are few of these Sort of People, who can give a Reason why the great God should be better pleased with a forrowful Heart, than an a-

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If God Almighty is pleased with our afflicting our felves, he must be pleased best when we afflict our felves most; and a greater Degree of Suffering must beget a greater Portion of his Favour: And confequently, the cutting our selves with Knives, as did the Priests of BAAL, must be more acceptable to him, than the bare whipping our felves with Rods, as do the Priests of ROME, &c. By the same Rule, if the endangering of one's Life be well pleasing to him, the destroying of one's Life must be more pleasing to him; and Despair and Self-Murther are more grateful Instances of Duty and Devotion to the God of Mercy, than barely being afraid of him, and barely making our Lives miserable. The pious Consequence of all which must be, that the bleffed and beneficent God, who

is the Giver of all Good, is the Author of all Evil and all Misery; and the Maker and Preserver of Mankind, who is the Father of Mercies, is also the Destroyer of Mankind,

and the Father of Cruelties.

Nor is this Reasoning so strange, or these Conclusions fo unnatural, as some may ignorantly imagine; fince the Priefts, who, for the godly Ends of Dominion and Gain, were the first Inventers of Sacrifices and Penances, have frequently proceeded to far in their inhuman and diabolical Craft, as to butcher Men to appeale their Deity. And indeed, when once you had taken their Word for the divine Will, you renounced all Right and Pretence to judge for your felf, or to dispute any Measure of Devotion which they had thought fit to prescribe. Thus, for Example, if the Priests told you, that their God graciously long'd for a Bonfire, and had, in his divine Goodness, appointed you to be the principal Faggot; as averfe as your carnal Spirit might be to this great Honour, yet you could not decline it, without the terrible Imputation of Disobedience, or Apostacy, and probably of Atheism: For, having given the Priest the Property of your Body, your Thoughts and your Behaviour, you were become ALL the Priest's.

The Duty of Penance is, according to certain Churchmen, a very necessary Duty; But there is another Duty quite opposite to it, and yet very necessary also; and that is, the

the Business and Duty of Festivals. These two may indeed feem Contradictions to each other, and to the Eye of unfanctify'd Reafon are fo; but where they are enjoined by Church-Authority, it is our Duty to think them orthodox and confistent, and so to be merry or melancholly, and to weep or laugh, just as Mother-Church COMMANDS us, in defiance of our Constitutions and our Understandings. We are to mourn on Good Friday, because on that Day our Saviour died; though, if he had not, we could not have been faved: And we are to take our Belly full of Meat and Mirth on Easter Sunday, because Christ rose on that Day from the Dead; though it was impossible for him to have continued there.

PENANCE is a ghostly Punishment impofed by a Priest, or voluntarily suffered by a Penitent, for some Offence real or imagined. Sometimes it confifts in Abstinence from certain Meats, which, it feems, are not fo much in Favour with Almighty God, as are others: A Piece of Cod, for Example, with rich Sauce, is less favoury in God's Sight, than a plain Piece of Beef and Cabbage, and a greater Atonement for Sin. Sometimes it is performed by Change of Apparel; and a dirty Hair-Cloth is more pious and meritorious, than a clean Holland Shirt. Sometimes it is perform'd by rambling to some Church, to stare at a wooden Saint, and kiss an old Coffin. Sometimes this holy Severity rests

rests altogether upon your Pocker, and God's Wrath is fervently and fuccessfully bribed away by the prevailing Intercession of some potent Pieces to his Priest, who will infallibly perfuade him to overlook your Guilt, and be good Friends with you. Sometimes you are to scarify your Back side for the Healing of your Soul, and reconcile your felf to Heaven by the Dint of Lashing; which will sometimes serve for another Purpose; and so a Scourge made of Broom, is made the Scourge of God. But, if drawing Blood on this Occasion be so pious, because so painful, I do not fee why the Drawing of a Tooth would not do as well; or why the Omnipotent would not be as propitious to desolate Gums, as to blifter'd Loins?

So much for praising God by being Sorrowful; in which Case, Sickness and Pain are great Blessings. Now for the Method of pleasing him, by being Joyful; in which Case, Festivity and Merriment are great Blessings too! So that, we see, the Almighty is highly pleas d with both our Misery and our Hap.

piness.

Worldly Blessings are, no doubt, the Gifts of God, and we ought to receive them with joyful Hands and grateful Hearts; and Religion, and Philosophy too, teaches us to submit to Afflictions and Calamities with Patience and Humility, and to consider them either as Effects of our own Intemperance and Folly, as the necessary and inevitable Concomitants

comitants of human Nature, or the Strokes of Providence intended for our Correction and Amendment; nor do I deny but it may be fometimes lawful and expedient too, mechanically to prepare our Minds with Dispofitions fuitable to the Actions they are to produce. older of entry falle .soupor

Every one's Experience shews him, that his Mind and Body operate upon one another's Both are improved by Exercise and moderate Food, raised and exhilerated by Musick or Diversion, enervated with Sickness, oppress'd with Drunkenness and Gluttony, fatigued with Labour, and often all the noble Faculties of the former are quite destroyed and extinguish-

ed by Distemper and Accidents.

It may be therefore not only lawful, but our Duty, by proper Food, agreeable Conversation, and due Exercise, to prepare and keep our selves in such a Temperament, as may best qualify us for cool Reflection, and enable us in the best Manner to exert our Faculties; but from what Principle of Reafon or Religion do we find, that we must work up our Passions beyond their natural Pitch, and endeavour to destroy the Serenity and Calm of our Minds, to do Homage to the Deity; who will accept no Service but what flows from a fincere and upright Heart, elevated and raised by a due Contemplation of the divine Perfections, and the Benefits received from our great Creator, or humbled by the Confideration of human Infirmities; and

not intoxicated with various Musick, pompous Shews, delicious Banquets, or Bottles of Brandy; nor depressed or sunk with Mortifications, Penances, Fasting, or unwholesome Diet; all which have nothing to do with true Relgion, though they have been always essential Parts of every false one.

Let us now fee what fort of Devotion thefe

Holy Days produce.

Idleness is the Nurse of Vice, and fills the Taverns and the Stews with many debauch'd Customers, who, had they any Thing elfe ro do, or would do any Thing elfe, might live as chafte and fober as any of their Neighbours, that are fo, because they are well employ'd. The common People think of a Holy Day with no other View, than that they shall then have their Belly-full of Ale, and Rambling, and Idleness. Perhaps, in the Morning, they hear a Sermon, which is often calculated to drive Peace and Religion out of their Souls, and to fill them with Bitterness and Rage against those who provoke them, by being fober Subjects, and conscientious Christians. Next comes a gluttonous Meal, and a Load of Liquor, which adds fresh Fewel to the orthodox Zeal they imbib'd in the Morning, and inspires them to deface or demolish Places facred to God's Worship, and to affront and infult every fober Man, who has not been at the Brandy-shop, and will not pronounce Hell and Damnation according to the Word of Command. After all this Mischief and Bravery, 100 they

they have Recourse to more Liquor, over which they swear and triumph upon their late Orthodox Exploits. Probably, at last they vomit up their Devotions in Drury-lane, and sinish the Holy Day in a Bawdy-House. Next Morning, the Sum of the Reckoning will be this; They have lost a Day, and with it their Innocence: They have risked their Health and their Souls: They have provoked God; and in his Name, committed Outrages upon their Neighbours. Sweet Jesus! Is this the Spirit of thy Church? Can these be thy Followers, or

the Followers of thy Servants?

Upon the Whole; a Man may ply his Imagination with black and dismal Ideas, till he has made his Heart as fad and forrowful as he pleases: He may also, by playing with his Fancy, and by amufing it with agreeable and humorous Images, render his Soul as merry as he pleases; and by these Means create either Comedy or Tragedy within himself: But neither is Wantonnels of Spirit any Worship of God; nor is this Gloominess of Soul any Devotion to him. The Mahometan Dervifes and Indian Brahmans exceed us by far in Fasting and Austerities: It is incredible what voluntary Torture and Plague they undergo in the Way of Religion. And as to godly Ranting and Roaring, the old Pagan Bacchanals were as mad and as drunk on their Holy Days, as we of the Establish'd Church can be on ours. The hard of state topics at the state fully hidden under Inventons,

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Priefts afraid of Ridicule.

Neighbours. Sweet lefus his this the Spirit of

of his assol temple bas shall drive contacting ELIGION, as the Popula Priests R have disfigured it, is only a wicked and ambitious Scheme, contrived by them, to set themselves aboye the People. This is so true, that whereever the Priests have the most Power, Religion has the least. Being neither appointed by the Law of Nature, nor the Law of Christ, they are only Intruders into the Affairs of Religion; which is therefore under an Usurpation, while it is under them. So that their Foundation being false, they are in most Countries reduced to support it by falle Facts, and deceitful Appearances. And as they are thus oblig'd to cover Fraud with Fraud, and support one Violence by another, it is no Wonder that we find it often so carefully hidden under Inventions, and deformed by REMER

by Absurdities; and all those Inventions and Absurdities defended by Cruelty and a strong Hand.

This strange Jumble of Fictions they have the Front to call by the Holy Name of Religion, and gravely to create Faith out of Lies: And with the groveling Multitude, whose Eyes are in the Earth, all this passes off well enough; They have fearful Hearts and simple Heads, and so stand always prepar'd to be frighten'd or deluded at the prieftly Word of Command. But because the Craft lies subject to daily Detection from rational and differning Men, its Champions have rais'd loud Cries and ftrong Prejudices against the Two principal Weapons, by which their Cause is most an nov'd ; I mean the Weapons of REASON and Ridrevill; the former of which discovers Truth, and the latter exposes Joines of the Body, and teaching the burn

What civil Treatment these Reverend Seers afford to Reason, I have shewn else where and shall handle in this Paper, the Business of Ridicule, which they always represent as impious and profane, whenever it meddles with the Cassock; and yet always exercise it according to their Talents, without Mercy, when the waggish grave Creatures are pleased to be Arch upon Dissenters or Free Thinkers.

To them is no doubt owing, that frequent but false Saying, now in the Mouth of every Ignorant; namely, that it is an easy Mat-

ter to make a fest upon Religion or the Priest bood; which, whether they are aware of it or not, is faying that their Religion and its Priests are a Jest. For he, upon whom the Jest is made, does, in Effect, make the Jest: otherwise it is sone. Religion and Virtue cannot be ridicul'd; and whoever attempts it, by shewing himself a Villain, raises Horror instead of Laughter, which is the End of Ridicule. But the vending of Grimace for Religion, and fetting up for Piety without Virtue, are the natural Subjects of Jeer and

daily Detection from rational and themiraM Whoever fears Ridicule, deserves Ridicule. He is conscious of a weak Side, and knows he cannot stand a Laugh. This is the Case of facred Grimace, or Gravity, which Men of Sense see to be only a studied Restraint laid upon the Muscles of the Face, and the Joints of the Body, and teaching them to move, not by the Impulses of Nature, and the Motions of the Heart, but by Defign, either to artract Admiration, or obtain Credit, or gain Followers. And therefore facred Grimace dreads Men of Sense. However, it is never to be fet aside; for this same affected Demureness, ridiculous as it is in it felf, is a folemn Bait to catch the Mobb, whose Respect always follows their Wonder. The Vulgar are caught, like Woodcocks, by the Eyes, and led, like Calves, by the Ears; Shew and Sound lead their fat Heads Captive. It is therefore no Won-

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Wonder, that in Popish Countries, a shewy Chancel, a curious tall Steeple, gilded Organs, and a delicate Ring of Bells, keep the Many on the Parson's side, and make them all good Churchmen; and always get the better of a plain Religion, that has its Abode only in the Heart, and wants all the above-mention'd Marks of the true Church. Besides all this, there are more Mirth and Holy Days in their Orthodox Faith, than in the contrary Scheme, which obliges Men to earn Heaven with the Sweat of their Brows, and

take Pains to be faved.

Thefe, however, are but small Instances of Ridicule, taken from the Force and Grimace of an external Religion. I shall here give Instances much more considerable, as well as much more ridiculous. Do we not fee the pretended Successors of the Apostles, at home and elsewhere, instead of making Tents, or converting the World, living voluptuoufly, and promoting the Excise? Do we not frequently fee the Ambassadors of God, sent to promote Virtue and Peace, and the Observance of his Laws, promoting Strife, frequenting debauch'd Houses, rooking after Wealth, and plaguing and reviling their Neighbours? Do we not fee holy Men, who have the Call of the Spirit, rioting in all the Works of the Flesh? Do they not buy Livings with Money, and then claim them by divine Right? Do they not chop and jockey away poor Parishes for such as are richer, and

and yet pretend to have upon their Hands the Cure of Souls; tho, by fuch vile Bargaining, they shew that they value as little those Souls they have just bought, as they do those they have lately fold? Do not many of them, tho' they are void of all Merit, yet demand great Respect; and tho' ignorant, pretend to teach, and to reveal God's Will, which is already reveal'd, and yet live as the there was no God? And do they not, without obeying God, fet up to command Men? Do they not feek Honour from their Cloth, which yet they dishonour? And do they not, for the blackest Crimes, claim San-Churry from the Church, which Church is the People, which People they abuse and deceive? Do they nor pretend to mend others, without being better than others, but in Truth more idle and proud than all others; two Qualities neither fuited to the Welfare of Religion nor of human Society? Do they not flatter and support the worst of Tyrants; plague and diffress, and often destroy the best of Kings; and in both Cases, do they not bely the Holy Ghost, and pervert his Meaning? Do they not pretend to be appointed for the Good of Mankind, and yet always make Mankind, where-ever they have Power, thoroughly miserably, base, poor, ignorant, and wicked. And finally, do they not invent vile Lies for vile Ends, and then blasphemously make God Almighty to father poor Parishes for fach as are figured Here

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Here is fuch a motly Mixture of opposite Principles and Practices, as will always render those, who are chargeable with them, the Contempt or Abhorrence of all Men who have Eyes and Understanding. Jest and Scorn will fublift as long as their Causes subsist; and Clergymen, of all others, will be most expos'd to them, while they continue to deserve them; because more Modesty, Truth and Confistency may be expected from them than any others. It is but a Piece of Justice due to Religion, to ridicule those, who, as far as they can, ridicule Religion, tho' they fet up for its Defenders. Ridicule, when it has no longer Matter to feed on, will die of it felf; and the Clergy, to avoid it, have no more to do, but not to deserve it: But to go on complaining, without amending, is to nourish Raillery and Satire, by their own Actions. But as the Reforming themselves is a Practice feldom known among High-Churchmen; Clamour, Lies and Oppression are the constant Remedies they apply to the great Grievances of Wit and Ridicule, as often as they meddle, or feem to meddle, with the Gloth. This will abundantly appear from the following Instance, which will also shew the wonderful Vigilance and Jealousy of Churchmen, in Behalf of the Trade.

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Moliere having, in his Plays, brought upon the Stage Characters from the highest Quality and Professions in France, without offending either; drew in his Tartuffe, an

excellent and strong Picture of a Hypocrite, who, tho' carefully distinguished from a Man sincerely religious, yet happen'd to resemble the Churchmen so much, that they raised a terrible Outcry against the Play; and, according to their laudable Custom, lugg'd Heaven, Head and Shoulders, into their Quarrel. Tartusse was, it seems, their Representative General, and in ridiculing his godly Grimaces and stoical Devotion, Moliere, they said, ridiculed them. In sine, by exposing the concealed Villain and Debauchee, the whole Posse of the Priests thought themselves expos'd.

Zealous therefore for the Dignity of the Cassock, and justly apprehending that a Contempt upon Hypocrify, would bring a Contempt upon the Order, they applied to the Court; I say to the Court, where, by a religious Subserviency to the Ambition, Lust, and all the Rogueries of the Great, this fort of Creature always finds Friendship and Countenance. That arbitrary and debauched Court could refuse the Priests nothing; and the Play was forbid. Thus the Tartusses of the Church, redeem'd from Scorn the Tartusse of the Stage: The Picture was secured from being shewn, by the Number, Clamour, and Interest of the Originals.

Not content to rail with all due Clerical Bitterness against this Comedy, and curse the ingenious Author by Word of Mouth; they detach'd one from their Body to curse

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him in Print. This Christian Author, without ever having seen the Play, pronounced it diabolical: He affirmed, that Moliere had a Devil, that he was a Devil Incarnate, a Devil in Man's Shape, a Libertine, an Atheist, and one who ought to be burn'd in this World, as he would assuredly be damn'd in the next. For the Vengeance of these Messengers of Peace never stops at the Death of their Victim; nor will they allow their Maker to

have more Mercy than themselves.

To shew how justly these holy Persons were alarm'd on this Occasion, I shall here give a Sketch of Tartuffe's Character, as drawn in that Play. He is a Fellow, who, from his godly Out-fide and great Poverty, is taken by an honest Gentleman, credulous and devour, into his Family, and permitted to govern it. He is a great Glutton, and a great Pretender to Fasting; a great Despiser of Money, but rooks all he can from his deluded Patron. He will not speak to my Lady's Maid till he has covered her Bubbies with his Handkerchief, so afraid is the Saint of Temptation; but at the fame Time he tempts my Lady her felf to Adultery, and endeavours to debauch his Benefactor's Wife, with Heaven in his Mouth. The Gentleman's Son discovers to his Father these Solicitations of the Hypocrite, which he had overheard; and the Lady owns and confirms them; but neither of them is believed: The poor bewitch'd Man cries, You are all Enemies to the Ding !

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godly Tartuffe; and tells him that to make him Amends, he will give him his Daughter, and fettle his House and Estate upon him. The Will of the Lord be done, fays the Hypocrite. Accordingly, by an instant Deed, to the apparent Ruin of his Family, he makes this godly Villain Heir of all he has, with a Right of present Possession. The Lady, not knowing what was done, does, by putting her Husband under a Table, make him a Witness of the Holy Lecher's Designs and Importunity. He is by this convinced; but when asham'd of himself, and enrag'd at the Ingrate, he bids him get out of his House; No, Sir, Tays Tartuffe, It is your Turn to get out; the House is mine, and you shall know it; I will be revene'd of you, on Behalf of Heaven, which you would wound thro my Sides. Behold an Orthodox Pattern of the usual Claim of Divine Right to the Wages of Villainy and Delutiondan sale a shore

All this Behaviour, and these Speeches, were such manifest Marks of the Church, that all its genuine Sons dreaded their coming upon the Theatre. Their Rogueries are all Sacred, and must not be set to View.

Moliere, to take away as much as was possible, all reasonable Ground of Clamour from the Ecclesiasticks, had not so much as suggested in the Play that Tartuffe was a Priest; and only called his Comedy, The Impostor, in general. Besides all this, he had dress'd up his Rogue like a Man of the World,

World. He had not given him so much as a slapping Bever, but a smart secular Cock, with a Sword, a good Head of Hair, a Cravat, and a gaudy Coat. But all this Precaution of Mohere's availed not; Tartusse had the Conduct, Crast, and Spirit of a Priest, tho' disguised like a Layman, and the Clergy sound themselves whip'd upon Tartusse's Back.

Eight Days after Tartuffe was forbid to be acted, the Court was entertained with a very irreligious Play, call'd Scaramouch. After it was over, the King told a certain Prince, that he wonder'd why those People, who were so scandaliz'd at Moliere's Comedy, did not say a Word of this. O Sir, answer'd the Prince, The Reason is plain; The Play of Scaramouch only makes a Jest of God and Religion, in which these Gentlemen are no wise concern'd: But Moliere has dared to bring the Priests upon the Stage; which is not to be suffered.



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Wednesday, October 19. 1720.

Of PRIESTLY CRUELTY.

were forteandalized at Mohere's Comedy, die

ry irreligious Plays call'd Scarements.

Good Man, is distinguished by his Humanity, as is the good God by his Mercy. Where there is no Humanity, there can be no Grace: We cannot possess at the same Time the Spirit of God, and the Spirit of a Brute or a Dæmon. Charity it self, the most sub-lime Christian Grace, seems to be only Humanity guided and animated by Piety: And this is the more likely, for that it is the Business of the Christian Religion, to recover to human Nature those Virtues, which were either lost or lessen'd by the Fall of Adam. Had Man continued as he was made, perfect, a new Covenant and another Institution had been unnecessary.

Humanity then is an amiable Virtue, and the Characteristick of a Man; and of a Man

Man civiliz'd, gentle, benevolent; purged from all Rage, and every unfociable Paf-

fion.

But the Appetites and Passions of Men being too powerful for Reason, and the Law of Nature; Religion was instituted to regulate and quell them. For this End, it proposes, as Sanctions and Restraints, the Fayour of God to the Virtuous, and threatens his Displeasure to the Wicked, in this Life; and, in the next, still more adequate Rewards and Punishments, even those of Heaven and Hell. This is the great Defign of Religion; and it effectually answers the fame. where its own honest and simple Dictates are observed and followed; than which Dictates nothing can be more plain and reasonable; the principal Precept of the Gospel, next after our Belief in Jefus Chrift, being that of Peace and Love: A new Commandment, fays our Bleffed Saviour, I give unto you, that you love one another.

In Consequence of this Doctrine, and of the heavenly Temper which it inspir'd, the first Christians lived together in perfect Concord, Love and Charity; and yet there is no Question to be made, but they differ'd from each other in their Conceptions about some Points in Religion; as we see the Apostles themselves also differ'd on several Occasions, and express'd some Warmth

in these their Differences.

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This fame Spirit of Charity and Love continu'd amongst the first Christians, till lying, crafty, and selfish Men, calling themselves Ministers, and assuming to be Teachers, fill'd them with the Spirit of Discord, and instructed them to hate one another. They rent them into Parties, inspir'd them with the Bitterness of Faction, and taught them its Watch-words, by which they were to distinguish themselves from all other Christians: I am of Paul, I of Apollos, and I of Cephas, and the like Cant, full of Zeal, but void of Sense and Religion, had a direct and mischievous Tendency to abolish Faith in Christ, and to place it upon Men; and, in fine, to turn Christianity into Caballing. They likewife marked out all who would not be driven nor deceived by them, with malicious and opprobrious Names, proper to expose them to Hatred and ill U-Sage. Heretick, Apostate, Unbeliever, Schifmatick, and the like hard and equivocal Words, were found strangely effectual towards stirring up Rage, Revenge, and relentless War, against those unhappy People who were miscall'd by them; so effectual! that the same Sett of Men have never suffer'd the same Sett of Words to wax obsolete, but to this Day use them, and cause them to be used, to the fame impious and anti-christian Purpose, and (where the Law does not restrain their bloody Hands, and guard the Innocent) with the fame Success.

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When these ungodly and merciles Ecclesiafticks had thus, under the Cloak of Religion, craftily rais'd the blind Resentment and impious Zeal of their deluded Followers, against their Christian Brethren, who preferred the Spirit of the Gospel, and the honest Convictions of their Consciences, to the Pride and Commands of Men; there follow'd fuch amazing Instances of Cruelty, and fuch terrible Scenes of Blood, as must affect the Hearts and the Eyes of all who read them, or hear of them, if they possess either Christian Grace or natural Compassion. Christians were, by their Priests, fer on to butcher Christians; and to make Havock of each other, in the Name of that Religion, which was distinguish'd from all other Religions, by a Spirit of Meekness, Mercy, and Love: And all this perhaps, for their different Manner of explaining a Mystery, which could not be explain'd; or which, if explain'd, ceas'd to be One.

This restless and unrelenting Rage, which Christians practised, at the Instigation of their Clergy, upon one another, for Thoughts and Opinions which they could not help, was a strong and a lasting Stumbling-block in the Way of the Unconverted; who could have but small Appetite for a Religion, which disown'd all Kindred to Peace and Humanity, and inspir'd its Votaries with such cruel Hatred, and such dreadful Fury: For, in short, that was the Religion they were to embrace:

embrace; a Religion no longer to be found in the Gospel of Christ, but in the ridiculous Systems and selfish Inventions of Priests. And it was no Wonder the Heathens were backward and afraid to embrace a Religion, in which the involuntary Mistake of a priestly Distinction, without a Meaning, might cost them their Lives, and ruin their Families.

So terrible and deform'd had merciless Christian Priests render'd the merciful and amiable Christian Religion! Their outrageous Zeal was become fo powerful, and had fuch bloody Effects, that the Pagan Perfecutions were real Advantages to Christianity, as they gave it a breathing Time from the more fatal Persecutions and even Adulterations of its own Priests; who, while the Civil Sword was over their Heads, being obliged to obscond or fly, could not throw about their Balls of Contention and War: and, therefore, against their Will, left Religion to flourish, as it always did, under those Pagan Persecutions, which their own turbulent and seditious Behaviour had often brought upon it. This is indeed their highest Praise, that the Church reap'd Good from their Wickedness.

The Pagan Persecutions no sooner eeased, but the War of the Christian Priests recommenced; and the Persecutions rais'd by them were ever more merciless and more dreadful, than those which were rais'd by the Heathen Princes; forasmuch as they added, as

far

far as they could, the Destruction of the Soul to that of the Body: So compleat was their Vengeance! And, besides, it had no End: The Severity of the Heathers had long and frequent Intermissions; but the

Cruelty of the Priests was insatiable.

The Persecutions practis'd by the Pagans had, moreover, this Mitigation, that they were occasion'd for the most Part by the Words and external Behaviour of Christians, who contemn'd their Gods, neglected their Temples, and ridicul'd their Manner of Worship: In all which, tho' they had Reason and Truth on their Side; yet they provok'd by fo doing these ignorant Bigots, whose false Religion laid no Restraint upon their Passions, but on the contrary greatly inflam'd them. But the priestly War was waged against the Mind it felf; the free and independent Mind! They would be controuling the voluntary, necessary and invincible Motions and Operations of the Soul; and be putting Bonds upon the Imagination, which is as ungovernable as the Wind or the Sea. You must say after them, nay you must think after them, and believe by their Direction; and either be Slaves or Hypocrites. A terrible and inflexible Tyranny! It was to no Purpose to alledge, that you could not perform Impossibilities, nor fee with other Mens Eyes: You must be punish'd for what you could not help; you must be deliver'd to Saran, in Spite of your Innocence; and

rewarded with Hell for your Sincerity, and Well-meaning: And the fame honest Qualities which entitled you to the certain Favour of God, provok'd the certain Vengeance of his pretended Ambassadors; to whose Empire, Vertue and Truth are ever the most formidable Foes. To compleat this ghoftly Barbarity, not appear'd by Death and Damnation; your good Name must be murder'd with your Body, and your Memory loaded with monstrous Calumnies, and bitter Defamations; which merciless Treatment could be expected only from that accurred Spirit, who has been a Lyar and a Murtherer from the Beginning, or from those who are acted by him. To pity you, was unpardonable; and to speak well of you, was to involve all those who did it, in your Doom. Thus holy Wrath is, of all others, the soonest kindled, the fiercest while it burns, and the slowest in going out, if ever it goes out.

It would be endless to give Instances of the bloody Spirit of such fort of Churchmen. They are the only Body of Men upon Earth, who possess least of human Compassion. They have been even ingenious in Cruelty; and shew'd vast Invention in their rigid, various, implacable and exquisite Manner of executing it. Ita feri, ut se mori sentiat, seems to have been the Doctrine and Delight of the Church, as well as of Caligula. Neither He, nor Phalaris, nor Perillus, nor Nero, nor any other Pagan Monster, who made himself Sport with

with human Agonies and Mifery, has exceeded them in the Variety and Inhumanity of his projected Tortures, nor equall'd them

in the Length.

MINING U.

the continual Authors of It is a melancholly Observation, that the Mahometans, who by Principle use the Sword, as their great and most prevailing Apostle for the Propagation of their Religion, do yet frankly tolerate Christianity, and every Sect of it, all over their Dominions and that, on the contrary, Christians, who by the Doctrine of the Gospel are allow'd the Use of no Means but those of Gentleness and Perswasion, to promote the Faith of Fesus Christ, do yet exercise Fierceness and Barbarity upon all who differ from them, where-ever the Mercy of the Government does not restrain the Cruelty of the Clergy. Thus far the Turks act, as if they were conducted by Grace, and obey'd the Precepts of our Blesled Saviour; and thus far the Christians act, as if they had adopted the Spirit and Fierceness of Mahomet, and renounced the Gospel for the Alcoran.

However, that I may not feem partial to the Mahometans, I shall add this mournful Reflection, namely, That too many of the Christian Clergy do justly share with these Infidels, the infamous Praise of having almost dispeopled the Earth. The Insidels have slain their Thousands, and They their Ten Thousands. They have been the great Promoters of Cruelty and the Sword; they

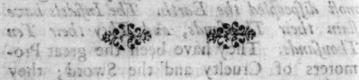
have

have been the constant Patrons of Arbitrary Power, that mighty Engine for rendering Mankind few and miserable; they have been the continual Authors of Wars, Famine and Massacres; and, in fine, they have been the great Instruments of driving Virtue, Truth, Peace, Mercy, Plenty and People, out of the World. Kill all, said the Abbot Arnold, a Monk militant, to the Army, which being employ'd by the Church to flaughter the poor pious Albigenses, had taken the City of Bezeir, and being Laymen, were inclining to have fome Mercy; Kill all, cried this bloody Priest, God knows his own, and will neward them hereafter. Accordingly Two Hundred Thousand of these conscientious Christians, and Catholicks mix'd with them. were instantly burcher'd for the Church.

To conclude; our modern Claimers of Church-Authority, do but contend for the fame Power and Advantages, which enabled and prompted these their Brethren to execute fuch numerous and melancholly Mischiefs; and whether they ought to posfels that Power, and these Advantages, or no, I take to be the great Point in Debate between the Bishop of Bangor and his Adversaries.

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NUMBER XLL

Wednesday, October 26. 1720.

Of High-Church ATHEISM.

The AT Religion, or the Worship of a Deity, is natural to Man, is confessed by Mr. Hobbes himself in his Leviathan, wherein he endeavours to assign the natural Causes thereof: And no History or Voyages give us an Account of any Country, in any Manner civilized, without Religion, as well as Priests or Ministers, and Temples or Places of Worship. Men have been in all Ages so prone to Religion, that rather than not have one, they have been contented to worship the most abject Beings in Nature; and indeed, nothing seems to have been too absurd and ridiculous for them to believe and practise, under the Direction of any Men, who had Considence enough to take upon them to be spiritual Guides of the People. It was ever sufficient,

to pretend to teach Religion, to make any Thing to be received as Religion.

The Egyptians worship'd Dogs, and for That Faith made internecine War. Others adored a Rat, and some For that Church suffer a Martyrdom. The Indians fought for the Truth Of th' Elephant's and Monkey's Tooth. But no Beaft ever was so slight, For Man as for his God to fight. They have more Wit, Alass! and know Themselves and us better than so.

HUDIBRAS.

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Nor is this Disposition at all abated in the World. The Pagan Part is much the fame. And many Christians are more prone, if posfible, to Absurdity and Folly, than the Pagans. The Popish, Greek, and several other Christian Sects worthip a Breaden God; And, besides other numerous. Absurdities and Follies, exceed them in that grand One of all, of delivering up their Persons, Estates, and Consciences, to the Priest; and of hating, damning, persecuting, and burning one another, and all who have any difference in Opinion with them, as he inspires them: Wherein they ou go both the ancient and modern Pa-gans, who have generally given Toleration to Men of different Religions from themselves, and have in no Place gone those Lengths in Perfecution which some Christians 03

(or rather some Persons pretending to be

Christians) have done in oil 101 am of meet

As a farther Proof that Religion is natural to Man, I observe, that no History informs us that ever Atheism (by which I understand, a direct Denial of the Existence of a Deity, a Providence, and Worship) was able to introduce it self among the People of any Coun-

try whatfoever.

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be the Greek, M Religion is not only natural to Man, but esteemed necessary to Government by Princes and States, who, whether they themselves have believed any Religion or no, have established Forms of Religion, and been willing that their Subjects should obey them, and defend their Country, upon a Principle of Religion, as knowing its powerful Operation

And besides, Religion has a great Support from Priests or Divines, who are very numerous every where, and have a Zeal for every Form they profess, equal to the Interest they derive from it: And if the Interest of one Form runs low, many of them can change their Parry, and become zealous for another Religion; as they did three times, in the Compass of five Years in England, in the Reigns of Edward the Sixth, Mary and Elizabeth; the non-complying Clergy never amounting to two hundred under any of those Changes. To off pring of all the rever

Great Complaints indeed have been and are daily made in relation to the mighty Aices

Growth of Atheism. But those Complaints seem to me for the most Part, if not altogether, goundless, and to be generally Calumnies of High-Church Priests, and High-Church Men, upon the best Christians, viz. Such who profess themselves ready to submit to the Authority of Jesus Christ, but refuse Submission to any Priests, whether they be the Greek, Muscovite, Roman, Dutch, Scotch, or English.

There is not, therefore, and cannot be, any Danger of the Overthrow of Religion, as long as Men continue Men; Religion will necessarily prevail amongst us, and every where else, in virtue of Mens general Disposition to Religion, either under one or several Forms, according as the Civil Magistrates of the World are more or less persuaded, that they themselves are to dictate (or to dictate after a Priest) Religion to their Subjects.

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The noify Outcry therefore of the Danger of Religion from Atheism or Irreligion, is a meer Chimera of the High Priests; which, in all likelihood, they start to put Men on a salse Scent, and to disguise and carry on their own Designs of Power and Wealth: For while People are alarm'd with the Fears of Atheism, they are disposed to fall into all the pretended Measures of the Priest to suppress it, and to become zealous for him, who never fails to make Use of the Panick or Madness of the People (which is his Opportunity) to establish Doctrines and Practices

Aices for his own Advantage; which at his Suggestion they falsly suppose to be most opposite to Atheism, and to be the best Means

to suppress it.

But the constant Danger, and the great and only Concern we ought to have, is, left, under the Colour and Name of Religion, or the Worship of God, we have not only Falfhood and Superstition put upon us, but the most detestable and wicked Practices introduced; fuch as tend to the Destruction of all Peace, both Publick and Private; all Virtue, Learning, and whatever is praise-worthy among Men. This is Practical Atheism: This is the Atheism to be dreaded and feared: This is the Atheism whereof we are in Danger: This is the worst Consequence we have to fear from speculative Atheism; for no Man can fay worse of speculative Atheism, than that it leads necessarily to all Immorality: And in fine, this Atheism the Priest has, in most Places of the World, introduced as Religion, to the utter Overthrow of true Religion; (which confifts chiefly, if not folely, in fuch Particulars as are for the Good of Society) for by making Men wicked out of Conscience, and upon a Principle of Religion, he as effectually destroys true Religion, as if he introduced speculative Atheism. What is it to a Believer in Christ, whether he be persecuted for his Religion by a Papist, who does it religiously, and upon a Principle of Conscience; or by an Atheist, who does it gard Y 3

either to protect himself, or to get Credit in the World, or to go Snacks with the Prieft, in the Advantages arising from Persecution? Do Men fuffer less by a Civil or Foreign War, begun by Zealots, on a Principle of Religion, to promote Religion; than if begun by Atheifts, for the Sake of Ambition, Glory, Power, Rapine, or Murther? Are the Feuds, Animolities and Passions, stirred up by Priests on Account of Religion, fewer and less diffurbing of the Publick Peace, than those of Men left to the Conduct of Atheiftical Principles? Is it not equal to Husbands to be wronged by Atheists, who need no Pardon, as by Popish Priests, who can pardon one another; or High Churchmen, who, notwithstanding such Actions, can be counrenanced by the Prieft, and merit greatly with him, on account of his Zeal for the Church, that is, the Priest? Nay, is not the Danger of Cuckoldom equal from a Popish Priest (who, by his Power of confessing and absolving the Woman, has so glorious an Opportunity) as from an Atheift? And would our High Priests, if they could get the Nation to be perswaded that they have the same Power of confessing and absolving, (as they have of late been attempting to do in their Books and Sermons) be lefs Cuckold-makers than Popilo Priests and Atheifts? I sollie

than Dr. S-e? Could an Atheist, who thinks no Deference due to a Bishop, have less Regard

gard for the Honour of a Christian Bishop than Dr. S-e, who pretends to think Bishops have Divine Authority? Could an Atheift, after he had been convicted of Calumny, and forced to confess his Evidence for the Calumny failed him, be more hardened in Villany, than to make no Satisfaction to, and ask no Pardon of the Person injured, but perfift in supposing that Time will discover his Charge to be true? Could a Set of Atheists have patronised Calumny more, than to have called that Doctor to be the Head of their Society; and might they not with equal Regard to Virtue and Religion, have chosen a Highwayman, or a Pick-pocket, who gives his Money for the Augmentation of poor Livings? Has a Modern Bishop more Satisfaction in being thus attacked by a High Church Priest, supported and abetted by others; or is the Society less disturbed by fuch Proceedings, than if such Priests were all Atheists?

Lastly, Is it not equally destructive of Liberty and Property, for Ecclesiasticks to use religious Cheats and Tricks to get Money from the People, towards raising and maintaining a needless Army of Black Coats, to live lazily in Monasteries, and other Religious Houses; as for Atheists to use any civil Tricks to maintain a needless standing Army of Red Coats, or by their Arts to plunder the Publick for any of their other Purposes?

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The Defign therefore of fome following Papers shall be, to shew how the High Church Jacobite Clergy promote true Atheism and Irreligion: That the Laity may be put on the true Scent of Atheism: That they may have a just dread of the true Atheism: That they may cease to be Atheists, or Worshippers of the Priest, and cease to receive Religion on his Authority; and that they may return to God and Christ, the fole Authors of all true thesits have patronifed Calumny monoigilas to have called that Doctor to be the

her, who gives his Money for the Aurenca-NUMBER XLII. more Satisfaction in being this attack-

ed by a High Church Prieft, fupported and

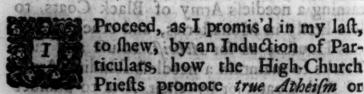
read of their Society; and might they not

tive choica a Highwayman, or a Pick poc-

Wednesday, November 2. 1720.

Of High-Church ATHEISM. Part 2.

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Proceed, as I promis'd in my last, to shew, by an Induction of Particulars, how the High-Church Priests promote true Atheism or Irreligion, by which I mean Practical A-

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I. And, first, I will begin with Perjury, or

Falle Swearing.

I will venture to lay it down as a Truth in Politicks, that Oaths (or fomething equivalent to them) are, on many Occasions, neceffary in Government; and that Peace among Neighbours, Punishment of Rogues, and the Settlement of Property, depend upon them. In the next Place, I will lay down as religious Truths, that an Oath is a folemn Act, both of natural and reveal'd Religion; that Oaths to a Government are to be kept; that there is no greater Irreligion, no greater Affront to God, no greater Infincerity and Injustice to Man, than Perjury; and no Point of Religion, upon which the Honour of God, and the Welfare of Mankind, are more highly concern'd, than in keeping Oaths; that Oaths of Allegiance to a Government intend Loyalty; that Oaths are to be taken in the Sense of the Impofers; that the Heart is to concur with the Lips in repeating them; that Men are to have no mental Referves in taking Oaths and that they must not design to break them, nor take them with Defign to repent of them.

And yet, on this Head, Atheists cannot be guilty of greater Irreligion than some of our High-Churchmen, (under the Conduct of our High-Church Priests) who sometimes are not for restraining our Kings by their Coro-

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nation Oaths; and, at other Times, are not for restraining the People, by their Oaths of Allegiance: that is, they are at one Time for breaking Oaths, by contending for unlimited Power, and unlimited Obedience; and at another Time for breaking Oaths, by retrenching the Authority of the Prince, and Allegiance of the Subject. Under this Reign, they are for the latter Berjury; as appears by their open Rebellions in their irreverent Discourses of the Person, and Family, of his Majesty; their Endeavours to alienate from him the Hearts of his Subjects; and inspiring the People with Disaffection to his Government; their inventing and reporting defamatory Stories to blemish his Character, and weaken his Authority; their rejoycing at any publick Distractions; their taking sides with the French, Turks, Swedes, Spaniards and Muscovites, whenever any of these Nations are in Measures contrary to the Interest of his Majesty; and lastly, by their ridiculing and cracking Jests upon the State-Oaths, and citing, as a fort of Scripture, these Verses of Hudibras in ni sevreles lemen on eval

He that Imposes an Oath makes it,

Not he that for Convenience takes it.

Then how can any Man be faid

To break an Oath he never made?

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And these Things are done by them, not after an Atheistical Manner, not under the

Appearance of attacking and ridiculing Religion and Virtue, the Joys of Heaven, and the Fears of Hell; but almost as if Slander and Calumny, Treason and Sedition, were Articles of their Church, which they were in Duty oblig'd to perform. They pretend all the while to be religious Men, good Churchmen; concern'd for the Church's Safety; Enemies of false Religion, and particularly of Presbyterianism; and zealous for the Orthodox Faith, contain'd in St. ATHANAsius's Creed. And tho' the High-Church Priests have not as yet written any Books to defend this Manner of taking and keeping Oaths; yet they take a Method, no lefs effectual to recommend it: They not only do not bear their Testimony against this open Wickedness, this open practical Atheism, (as is their Duty) but are active themfelves in the fame Practices, and countenance the Guilty, by the Credit and Applause they give them; and the Distinction they shew towards them, recommending them as good Churchmen, and reviling others, principally, for being faithful to the Oaths they have taken to the Government. All which is more effectual to promote Perjury, than direct dogmatizing in Behalf of it; for this fly Way gets them the Applause of many, and prevents the Clamour of others against them; who would be generally detefted, notwithstanding the Devotion of the People towards them, if they openly defended Perjury. Now.

Now, pray, what is the Difference between these High-Churchmen and Atheists? Can Atheists be less bound by Oaths? Can Atheists be worse Subjects? Are not Atheists derestable, because it is suppos'd they cannot be bound by Oaths? And are others less detestable, whom Oaths do not bind? Can any Thing be faid worse of Atheists, than what Mr. LESLEY fays (in his Answer to King's State of the Protestants in Ireland) that the Parliament cannot make an Oath which the Cleren will not take? Had not King GEORGE Reason to apprehend as much Mischief from his Swearing-Religious - Factious - Rebel - Church-Subjects, as he could have from Swearing-Rebel-Atheifts? Was the Case of the Dissenters, and other good Subjects, who were plundered before the Rebellion for their Loyalty, or fuffered in the Rebellion, better for receiving fuch Usage from the Hands of High-Churchmen, than from Atheifts? They are plainly as bad as Atheists can ever be suppofed to be; worse than Atheists, acting by the Principles of Ease and Self-Preservation, which may be supposed to be the most general Principles of Action in Atheifts; and; in fine, worse than any profligate Libertines (I ever met with in Italy it felf, that Seat of High-Churchship) whom I never heard talk fo irreligiously about Oaths, as I have heard fome High-Churchmen, or deliver fuch open Perjury as Parson B-se. What adds to the Wicked-

Wickedness and Guilt of these High-Churchmen, is, that they pretend to be Christians, and to take their Religion from the New Testament; that they are of a Church, whose distinguishing Doctrine is Loyalty to the Prince, and which they extend so far as to allow Resistance in no Case to be lawful; and that they have a Sovereign, against whom they have nothing to object, but his Virtues, his mild, equal, impartial and just Administration of Government; for as to his Title (which is the best of Titles, viz. the voluntary Establishment of a free People by an Act of their Legislature) these Swearing High-Churchmen can have no just Scruple.

These High-Churchmen therefore are true Atheists; They are practical Atheists. speculative Difference between them and Atheifts, is a Matter of small Moment; for what is it to their Neighbours, while they act like Atheists, that they believe in God and Religion? For while they act like Atheifts, they do all the Mischief that Atheists can do, and all those Things for which alone Atheism is so justly detestable. For if Speculative Atheism did not lead Men to Immorality, to Faction, to Rebellion, &c. it would be fo far from being detestable, that it would be preferable to any Religion that spoil'd Mens Morals, and made them bad Subjects: And I would rather have a Speculative Atheist for my Neighbour, and Fellow-Subject, and run the Hazard of his being a vicious Man, than

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than an Orthodox-Religious Man, whose Religion made him Vicious.

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Wednesday, November 9. 1720.

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Of High-Church ATHEISM. Part 2.

HE next Article of Atheism, that I charge upon High-Church Priests and High-Churchmen, shall relate to the very Being of Religion, and that is, Toleration of Religion; for unless there be a Toleration of Religion, Religion, which is a Matter of Choice and Conscience, is almost excluded the World.

It is afferted by Mr. Horres, that the Civil Magistrate of every Country is the Legislator in Matters of Religion; that his Subjects ought to obey him therein; and that, if they do not, they should be compelled by Force to profess that Religion he enjoyns. Which Doctrine implies Speculative Atheism, as it destroys God's Dominion, by subverting his

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his Authority and Laws, and by making a God of the Magistrate; and as it roots out all Religion, by taking away Mens Right to follow their Consciences therein; which constitutes the very Essence of Religion: And it must introduce Practical Atheism, if follow'd; by disturbing, distressing, imprisoning, and taking away the Lives of the best Men; by setting Men at Variance with one another, and causing Civil Wars on a religious Account; and by leaving Men to be govern'd only by the Laws of the Civil Magistrate, and taking away all Motives to good Actions drawn from Conscience towards God.

Now the Speculative Principles of High-Church Priests, and those of Atheists, differ but little from each other: And the Practices following from both their Principles are the same; that is, the High-Church Priests must be no less Practical Atheists, than the Speculative Atheists themselves.

ples of High-Church Priests. The the High-Church Priests contend for a Law of God, a Bible and a Conscience; yet they as effectually subvert those good Things, as the Atherists, by asserting, at the same Time, a Right in the Civil Magistrate to compel Men by Laws, or Force, to embrace the true Religion; For what is the Difference between a Right in the Magistrate to compel Men to embrace the true Religion, and a Right in

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the Magistrate to compel Men to embrace his Religion, which he will always think the best

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All the Arguments of High-Church Priests for Church-Authority, and Church-Unity, imply the same Atheism. For do they not therein contend for Submission to Man in Matters of Religion, and for the Sacrifice of some Mens Consciences to the Judgments of other Men? Which is subverting the Law of God, the Bible, and Conscience, no less, than vesting the Power and Compulsion in

the Civil Magistrate. Vawa anixas bas

But their Arguments against all Innovations, in Matters of Religion, are most Atheiftical. They contend so generally against Innovations, that they cite with Approbation MECENAS'S Advice to AUGUSTUS, viz. That he should follow constantly the Establish'd Religion of his Country; for all Innovations would foment Sedition in the State, and be a Means to subvert his Government. Which Advice (tho' it so manifeltly afferts Atheism and Hobbism, and implies, that neither Augustus, in whose Reign our Bleffed Saviour CHRIST was born, nor any other Pagan Prince, ought to permit Christianity, which is the most pure and peaceable Religion, to become the Establish'd Religion of their Country) Dr. Dawson has larely had the Confidence to lay before the present Archbishop of Canterbury; whose Conduct and Writings, before he was promoted to that

that See, gave not the Doctor the least Ground to suspect that worthy Prelate would approve such Atheism, Irreligion, and Anti-Christianism; and no Man dares say they

have done fo fince.

2. Secondly, The Practices following from the Principles of High-Church Priests, are the same with those following from the Principles of Atheism. For do not many Christian Civil Magistrates exercise the Right asferred by High-Church Priests to belong to them, and fine, burn, imprison, inflict Corporal Punishments, take away Mens natural Rights, merely because Men follow their Consciences in what they are perswaded is the Law of God? And what more can be done in Virtue of any Atheistical Principles? Nor do the Notions of a Bible, a Law of God, and a Conscience, (however inconsistent fuch Notions are with making penal Laws in Matters of Religion) render High-Churchmen less Persecutors, than if they were acted by any Atheistical Principles; as is manifest from what is done in most Countries, where, in Proportion to the Power and Influence of High-Church Priests, Degrees of Violence upon Mens Consciences prevail: Nor do the Precepts of Christ, who requires all Men to fearch the Scriptures, and to believe and live according to the Rules there laid down, and who never fends Men to the Magistrate or the establish'd Priests for the understanding of the Bible, abate in the least their

their persecuting Zeal. Nor lastly, does the most perfect Morality taught by CHRIST; who every where inculcates Love of Man. kind, Forbearance, (and Forgiveness even of many Immoralities) and universal Charity, and who has faid, By this shall all Men know, that ye are my Disciples, if ye love one another; restrain the High-Church Priest from stirring up in Mens Minds the utmost Hatred, Malice, and Fury of Men against one another; who feem to learn little else from their Pries as Matter of Religion, but the Doctrine of Malice against those whom he dislikes. Which Doctrine they practife with fuch Warmth and Zeal, as if it was the principal or only Article of Religion: And therein do more Mifchief than Men acted by Atheistical Principles can be suppos'd to do; for Atheism is as incapable of making Men uncharitable to one another, on Account of Religion, as it is inconfistent with true Religion to be uncharitable.

How these Atheistical Practices have prevail'd in England, even since the Reformation, (for I will not mention the Times before, wherein this priestly Atheism was rampant) is apparent from our History, which gives an Account of the burning, hanging, sining, imprisoning, starving in Goals, banishing, corporal Punishments, and harrassing Thousands of good and religious People, on the Score of Religion; upon which I crave Leave to make these Observations.

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1. First, That as the High-Church Priests have been always most forward in making and defending Penal Laws; fo they have been the most Barbarous and Malicious in putting them in Execution, where they were intrusted with it, as is manifest from the Proceedings in the Star-Chamber; where, under the Influence of Archbishop LAUD, and fuch High-Priefts, exorbitant Fines, flitting Nofes, cutting off Ears, branding the Face with hot Irons, fevere Whipping, the Pillory, and Imprisonment for Life in Dungeons, or Places either unwholfome or remote from Friends, were common Punishments; and fometimes all inflicted upon one Man. Upon pronouncing One of these Sentences a-gainst LEIGHTON, LAUD pull'd off his Cap, and gave Thanks to God. But the Lay Part of the Court were merely Priestdriven and outwitted by LAUD in such Sentences: For when a Knight mov'd one of the Lords about the Dreadfulness of the Sentence, intimating, that it open'd a Gap to the Prelates to inflict such disgraceful Punish. ments and Tortures upon Men of Quality; that Lord reply'd, 'twas but in terrorem, and that he would not have any one think, that the Sentence should ever be executed. But that Lord (either judging of other Men by himfelf, or perhaps joining in the Sentence upon a Promise from LAUD, that it should not be executed) found himself mistaken in LAUD, who, having long divested himself of all Z 3

Lay Pity, caus'd the Sentence to be rigo-

roully put in Execution.

2. Secondly, The Ecclefiastical Commissioners in the High Commission Court put the Oath, ex Officio, upon those brought before them on the Score of Religion; an Oath, unjust in it self, as it obliged the Parties to answer all Interrogatories, and thereby made all Honest Men, if guilty of any Thing esteem'd a Fault, their own Accusers; and an Oath, neither founded on Act of Parliament, nor on Common Law in that Cafe. After what Manner this usurp'd Power of adminifiring that Oath was exercis'd, you cannot have better express'd, than in the Words of the Lord Treasurer BURLEIGH to Archbishop WHITGIFT. Your Articles are so curiously pen'd, so full of Branches and Circumstances, that the Inquisitors of Spain use not so many Questions to comprehend and entrap their Preys.

Parliament has been dispos'd to introduce the Practice of our Saviour's Doctrine of Love and Charity, by repealing any penal and sanguinary Laws, the High-Church Bishops always oppos'd such Repeal. In Proof whereof I will give the Reader but one Instance, referring him to his own Observation for more Proofs in the Case. In 1677, when the Nation and Parliament were under great Apprehensions from Popery and a Popish Successor, and fear'd, lest the Law for Burning

Hereticks

Hereticks would be soon put in Execution against Protestants, a Repeal of that Law was attempted and succeeded: But it was opposed by the Bishops, who desired that Law might continue in terrorem to Fanaticks, tho God forbid, said they, it should ever be put in Execution. This Fact, and many others of the same Kind, will soon be made more known by the (late) Bishop of Sarum's

History of his Times.

4. Fourthly, I observe, that the Persecutions fince the Reformation have mostly been for errant Trifles, and Things of the least Importance to the World: We have been chiefly plagu'd and fet together by the Ears, about Caps, Hoods, Surplices, Ceremonies, external Forms, removing Tables from one Part of a Church to another, and Railing them in. But the most extraordinary Subject of Persecution and Animosities, and that seems peculiar to our High-Church, was the Book of Sports. High-Church having taken a Fancy to make it Religion to have no Sermons on Sundays in an Afternoon; but, instead thereof, to make the People Dance and Play, in Opposition to Puritans and Dissenters, who, it feems, were fo irreligious as to think they were oblig'd to spend their Sundays after divine Service was over, in Family or private Devotion: That Book was iffu'd out by Authority; and many godly Clergymen were harrafs'd for not reading it, as many Laymen were for not turning that. Holy-Day into a Play Day.

But to the Glory of King GEORGE, this priestly Atheism of Persecution is now vanishing. His Majesty began his Reign with a noble Declaration for Toleration, wherein he allows his Subjects to have a Right to a Religion and a Conscience: The Persecution commenc'd by a High-Church Priest against Honest Whiston fell; and the Promoter is defeated of all Hopes of getting his Charges by a Bishoprick: The Bishop of Bangor has preach'd up the Authority of God and Christ before his Majesty; and his Majesty (the Head of our Church, the supreme Ordinary, and the fole Fountain of all Ecclefiaftical, as well as Civil Authority) has preach'd it to the Nation: Some penal Laws have been repeal'd; wherein our truly Christian Prelates had, to their immortal Honour, their Share: Liberty of Examination and Debate (which is the most Sacred of all Principles, as it is the fole Foundation of all common Sense, Truth, and true Christianity) grows upon us: A Majority of Diffenting Ministers, assembled in a Synod, have declar'd for the Bible; which was never before done by any Synod of Priests, who have always endeavour'd to establish their own or fome other Human Authority. The High Priests dare not plainly excite the Mob to burn, plunder, and molest their Neighbours; but are in great Measure reduc'd to Pulpit and private railing and damning. The fole Perfecution now on Foot, and countenanc'd by Au-

Authority, is, That High-Church cannot persecute Dissenters; for it is esteemed by some a Church-Persecution not to be able to persecute others: And lastly, I dare write the In-

dependent Whig.

O Glorious King George! O the Happiness of a Nation to be govern'd by such a Monarch! Of whom I cannot but observe, that he seems to me the Favourite of Heaven, which fo bleffes all his Defigns with Success, that he need not fear Success in any truly virtuous or religious Designs. And (that I may use the printed Words of Mr. BOLD, an excellent Divine of our Church) It is no fmall Encouragement to all, who have any Acquaintance with the Christian Religion, to rest assured, that God will, in due Time, notwithstanding all the Machinations and Efforts of ill People, bring Matters in this Land to an happy Issue, because none are against the Government of our most Excellent Sovereign King GEORGE and the Protestant Succession, but who are also against the Lord Jesus CHRIST being sole King in his own ' Kingdom, and consequently against his being fole Law-giver to, and Judge of his own Subjects, in Matters of Conscience, and which relate to their eternal Salvaf-tion.



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NUMBER XLIV.

Wednesday, November 16. 1720.

Of High-Church ATHEISM. Part 4.

ave any Acquaintance with the Christica

S a further Proof of the Charge of Practical Atheism upon High-Church Priests, I proceed to shew, how they confound and subvert all Morality and Holiness of Life; which is the main Design of all Religion, and more particularly of the Christian.

teaching the most Immoral and Unholy Doctrines, and thereby leading Men to Actions, in the highest degree, prejudicial to human Society.

To do as we would be done unto, and to love our Neighbour as our selves, are Moral and Christian Principles, of daily and most general use. We cannot converse a Moment, without acting agreeably or contrary to them.

And

And the Happiness of Society consists, in great Measure, in the Practice of those Duties; as the Misery of Society consists in their Breach. For what is Happiness in Society, but the Prevalency of universal Love, and equal Favour and Justice? And what greater Degree of Love can we shew to others, than that Love wherewith we love our selves? And what can a whole Society wish for more, than that equal Favour and Justice be distributed among them? And what is Misery in Society, but Malice, and Hatred, and Partiality; and their Consequences, Disorder, Confusion and War?

Now the High Priest dogmatizes against these fundamental Maxims of Morality, whenever he contends against the Right of Men to judge for themselves in Religion, which he pretends to use himself; whenever he contends for Penalties, or Discouragements of any Kind, against those who differ in Opinion from him, which he would not at the fame time think just to have inflicted on himfelf for differing in Opinion from them; whenever he damns Men as Hereticks and Schifmaticks, in Cases wherein he would not damn himself; whenever he judges whole Sects or Bodies of Men Infincere, (as is his constant Method towards Diffenters) and would not at the same time be thought insincere himself; and in fine, whenever he preaches contrary to that Love of all Men, that Forbearance, that Forgiveness of Injuries, that Meekness, ommends

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that Peace and Quiet, that Beneficence to all in Distress, and that Charity (the greatest of Moral and Christian Virtues) which beareth all Things, believeth all Things, hopeth all Things, endureth all Things, which is the Charity taught in the Gospel: All which he cannot but be willing to see prevail in the World, with respect to himself. How often the High Priest preaches after this Manner; or rather how seldom he preaches otherwise; and how successful he is in introducing the Practical Atheism suited to such Doctrines, viz. Factions, Quarrels, Violence, Injustice, Plundering, Partiality, Devastation, and Murder; every Observer may be satisfy'd by his own Experience.

Rebellion is the actual Dissolution of Order in a Society; and is ever founded either on the Jealousies and ill-grounded Animosities of the People in Relation to their Sovereign, or to one another; or on suppos'd Defect of Title in the Sovereign. Now these our High-Church Priests promote, and inculcate by their constant Lectures of Church-Peril: of the fad State of the present Times, beyond all that ever were before them; of their own want of Power; of Passive Obedience and Hereditary Right; and feveral other favourite factious Subjects: And this way lead the People to Rebellion; and that in Breach of Oaths, which are the most Sacred Band of Society.

And as the High Jacobite Priest thus teaches the very worst Vices, so nothing recommends

recommends a Layman to him fo much as

the Practice of them,

2. Secondly, The High-Church Priest subverts Morality and Holiness of Life, by laying an undue Stress on Matters of little or no Importance; and thereby engages the Thoughts and Affections of Men about them, to the neglect of Morality and that Holiness of Life, which is the End and Design of all Religion. For whoever places Religion in Trisles, will (like the Jews who were much concern'd to pay Tythe to the Priest of Mint, Annise and Cummin) neglect the

weightier Matters of the Law.

What Work have we in England; what Hatred, Damning, and Uncharitableness is there among us, about mere Ceremonies, and external Forms? And what Arguing and Zeal is there for imposing them; when a general Agreement in them (as it would be manag'd) would be fo far from being of any real Use in Religion, and tending to Peace, that it would be a Conspiracy against the Rights of Mankind, and against that Peace and Charity, which would otherwife prevail? For have not Men a Right to follow their Judgments in Matters of Religion, and especially in such Matters as are allow'd to be indifferent in themselves; and is not that Right invaded by imposing them? And would not not Peace and Charity (which, we see, exist not under Imposition) prevail, by allowing Men to practife as differently

as their Judgments direct them; as we see they do prevail in Countries of Liberty and Toleration, in Proportion to the Degree of

Liberty and Toleration allow'd?

What Work is there at this Time, how many Volumes are there daily publish'd, and how deeply concern'd is all England, about certain Speculations, whereof the People can understand nothing, and about which the Priest confounds himself? Can the People understand any of the various Schemes and Hypotheses invented by Divines, in relation to the Trinity in Unity, and the Incarnation of God? Does Dr. Waterland, who is a very learned, acute, and ingenious Person, and has writ two great Books on this Subject, know what he contends for himfelf, when he expresses the Sum of his Doctrine of the Trinity in Unity, in these Words, that each Divine Person is an individual intelligent Agent: But, as subsisting in one undivided Substance, they are all together, in that respect, but one undivided intelligent Agent? That is, One Individual is Three Individuals, One undivided Agent is Three undivided Agents, and One Person is Three Persons? And can any Mortal suppose the People to be in the least concern'd about fuch fophistical Chimeras, crabbed Notions, bombastick Phrases, and Solecisms? And must not Zeal about Ceremonies, and unintelligible Speculations, as much supplant and take the Place of Morality,

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rality, as ever Rites did among the Jews, or the religious Trumpery of the Pagans did among them? Even Zeal for Truth in certain Points, is not of fuch Importance as is commonly suppos'd. I have been much pleas'd with the Judiciousness and Charity of the following Passage in a Sermon of the Present Archbishop of Dublin, the most worthy and truly profound Dr. King. Let us suppose one, who takes all the Descriptions we have of God in Scripture literally; who imagines him to be a mighty King that sits in Heaven, and has the Earth for his Footstool; that at the same time has all Things in his View which can happen; that has Thousands and Thousands of Ministers to attend him, all ready to obey and execute his Commands; that has great Love and Favour for such as diligently obey his Orders, and is in a Rage and Fury against the Disobedient: Could any one doubt but he, who in the Simplicity of his Heart should believe these Things as literally represented, would be fav'd by Virtue of that Belief; or that he would not have Motives strong enough to oblige him to love, honour, and worship God? The Imperfections of such Representations will never be imputed to us as a Fault, provided we do not wilfully dishonour him by unworthy Notions, and our Conceptions of him be such as may sufficiently oblige us to perform the Duties he requires at our Hands. The like may be faid of a Man who has mistaken Notions of the Trinity in Unity, and of the Person

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Person of Christ; provided he does not wilfully dishonour God and Christ by his Notions, and conceives Christ to be a Legislator, and a Ruler sent from God; than which Conception, nothing can more oblige us to person the Duties, that both God

and Christ require of us. 164 samuel of od

3. Thirdly, There is no Crime, but what has, at Times, and on certain Occasions, the Support and Encouragement of the Popish Priest; as there is no Virtue which he does not at Times, and on certain Occasions, discourage. Let a Man be Whoremaster, or Drunkard, or Lyar, or Slanderer, or Passionate, or Revengeful, or Cheat; and he may meet with fair Quarter from the High Priest, be seldom or never reprov'd by him, have his Esteem and Countenance, and the Character of a good Churchman from him, and be fure of Prieftly Absolution at last, provided he heartily espouses the Interest of the Priest, that is, contends for his Power and Wealth. On the other fide, let a Man have ever fo many virtuous Qualities, and let him also be a fincere Believer in Jesus Christ; but without the Quality of espousing the High Popish Priest's Interest; and he will never stand so fair in the Priest's Eyes as the aforesaid Prosligate-Good-Churchman. This Conduct of the Priests has a mighty Influence on the Actions of Men, and tends to make them as bad as their Inclinations, and Temper, dispose them

them to be; inafmuch as the general Esteem and good Name of most Men will depend on the Characters given of them by the Priests, who are the general Gossips, and are reverenced every where for their inward Sanctity, and external long Gowns, and broad-brim'd Hats, the latter fufficiently manifesting the former. I will not deny, but that the Priests had much rather their Followers were virtuous than otherwise; they well knowing, that Credit is to be got by having fuch Men among them, and that the best Harvest is to be made of the Weakness and Superstition of virtuous Men. But the Bulk of Men being vicious, and the virtuous Man of Sense being in the Interest of Religion, and against Priestcraft; the aforesaid High Priests are reduc'd to the Necessity of countenancing the Vicious, to carry on their own Interest with a sufficient Party.

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4. Fourthly, High-Church Priests, by the Weakness of all Popish States, except the Common-wealths of Venice and Norcia, and of most of the Protestant States, are let into too great a Share of the Civil Governments of Europe; and thus by becoming Acting Politicians, confound all National, Publick, and Political Morality. For, as the late Bishop of Sarum observed, the Priests have a Secret to make the Natives of a Country miserable, in Spite of any Abundance, with which Nature has furnish'd them.

They

They have not Souls big enough, and tender enough for Government: They have both a
Narrowness of Spirit, and a Sourness of Mind,
that does not agree with the Principles of Human Society. Nor have they those Compassions for the Miserable, with which wise Governors ought to temper all their Counsels;
for a stern Sourness of Temper, and an unrelenting Hardness of Heart, seem to belong to
that Sort of Men.

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creates of whose; and class by hecoming 461.

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Locality and Chiefe, in Shife of Charles of a Coolity and Chiefe, in Shife of any Affair day of the chiefe of the Chiefe Affair Chiefe Affair

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that the corrent Abfordities and Superfile toons, tour VIX PREBMOUND In Priche Priche Liverentia and Villance, are fufficient Ren-

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theiffs and look People impofe on them-

Wednesday, November 23. 1720.

Person el a Libertine

ions to make all Rejution be deem'd a

Of High-Church ATHEISM. Part 5.

Places, and have never been numerous any where; even tho all those be accounted such, upon whom Atheism has ever been charged. But where they do exist, they seem to me to owe their Rise principally to Superstition and Priestcraft; and the higher the Church and Priest have been, the more numerous have been the Atheists: Nay, there seems to me more just Cause to superstition than any other Men.

r. Whoever reasons himself into Atheism, undoubtedly reasons very wrong, and either proceeds on false Principles, or makes wrong Conclusions from true ones. But among the A a

several false Arguments, by which the Atheifts and loose People impose on themfelves, and endeavour ro feduce others ; there is none more frequently urg'd, than that the current Absurdities and Superstitions taught by Priefts, and the Priefts Hypocrify and Villanies, are fufficient Reafons to make all Religion be deem'd a Cheat, and Priests of all Religions to be deem'd the Same. The Poet Tays, in the Person of a Libertine,

We know their holy Jugglings, Things that would fartle Faith, and make us (deem,

Not This, or That, but all Religions false. Peculative Acherits exist but in few

This indeed is pitiful Reasoning, and ought to be extended no farther than to those Doctrines and Priefts, against whom the Objections lie. But for it is Men reafon and Experience will prove, that dis who High-Church Priest, and his Proceedings, which make the Atheift. But before I proceed to that Experience, I will fay this in behalf of this Argument for Atheifm, that the Evil apparent in the World (which fome urge as an Argument against the Existence of a Deity) feems to me most visible in the Actions of Priests, who do, in my Opinion, create the greatest Disorder among Memor viborduobau

The late Bishop of Sarum tells us, in his Travels, That a Man of Quality at Rome, feve-

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and an eminent Churchman, faid to him, that it was a borrible Scandal to the whole Christian World, and made one doubt of the Truth of the Christian Religion, to see more Oppresjum and Cruelty in their Territories, than was to be found even in Turkey ... He lays, some Physicions in Naples are brought under the Scandal of Atheism: And it is certain, that in Icaly Men of fearthing Understandings, who have no other Idea of the Christian Religion, but that which they see receiv'd among them, are very naturally tempted to disbelieve it quite for they believing it all alike in gross, with out distinction, and finding fuch notorious Cheats as appear in many Parts of their Rehgion, are, upon that, induced to disbelieve the Whole And it is an Observation of Dr. GEDDES, that there are more People of no Religion in Italy, than in all the World besides, (Tracts, Vol. 3.) England is also said by our High Church Priefts, to abound with Atheilis, no less than Italy. But if there be fuch People among us, they are entirely owing to the Conduct of fome of our Priefts, who, I will be fo bold as to affirm, are as impudent in their Pretences to Power and Authority, as the Italian Priests dare to be. This, rho' at first sight it may seem Matter of Admiration, that they should be so in fuch an inlightned Country as England, where fo many understand right Reasoning and true Christianity; yet is natural enough, if it be consider'd, that it is the last struggle Aa 2

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straggle of Priests for Popery and Slavery : They contend for the most ridiculous Things, as necessary to Salvation; and by their Prevarications about Oaths, and Shiftings about Doctrines, according to their Intereft, dispose Men to make the same Inference, as the Men of Quality, and Men of fearthing Understandings do in Italy. And fome among us may, perhaps, make that Atheiftical Inference, confidering how the Nation had been managed in the High-Church Reign of King CHARLES the Second, when the Delign, according to the lare Bishop of Sarum, seem'd to be to make us first Atheists, that we might more easily be Papifts. in or bombar out a nogu , ora , more

Dr. HIOKES tells us, that the Practices of the swearing Clergy, since the Revolution, who had preached Passive Obedience before, have tempted loofe and unprincipled Men to turn Atheists; and that those Clergy have set open the Floud Gates to that Deluge of Atheism and Impiety, that now overflows the Nation. And he cites another Author with Approbation, for faying, This Change has made many fober Men sceptical, and gone farther towards eradicating all the Notions of a Deity, than all the Labours of Mr. HOBBES. I have been ready to suspect, that Religion it felf was a Cheat; and others, of my own Knowledge, have the same Temptations to question Reliand true Christianicy; yet is fift til ming

nough, if it be confidered; that it is the laft firuggie

Mr. Lefley fays, The Carriage of the Clergy in the Revolution, has given greater Occafion to the ENEMIES OF THE LORD TO BLASPHEME, and turn'd more Men from the Church of England, to the Church of Rome, and EVEN TO ATHEISM; bas overturn'd, ruin'd, divided, and dishonoured our Church more, than if that Persecution, which some feared or pretended, had fallen upon them. He fays, The Clergy banter and mock God to bis Face; and that Atheism is a smaller Sin than this, since it is better to have no God at all, than to fet up One, to laugh at him; and that the greatest Danger to which we are now exposed, by the Defect of so many of our Clergy, is a Contempt of all Religion, which is now spread over the Land, in a manner unbeard of in former in their Centures, and Perfocutors; wissph.

Laftly, The date Bishop of Sarum tells us, that fince his Conversation with Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, he had had many Occasions to discourse with People tainted with wicked Principles; and, fays he, I do affirm, that the greatest Prejudice those Persons have at Religion, at the Clergy, and at the Publick Worship of God, is this, That they say they fee Clergymen take Oaths, and use all Prayers, both ordinary and extraordinary, for the Government, and yet in their Actings and Discourses, and of late in their Sermons, they shew visibly that they look another Way; from whence they conclude, that they Aa 3 are modern

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are a mercenary fort of People, without Con-

Science

Atheism being, in my Opinion, a most unnatural Thing, and a Crime, which, for its Madness as well as Guilt, ought to thut a Man out of Civil Society, I am not dispofed to lay it to any Man's Charge, tho a vicious Person; much less to any sober Man's, without his open Profession of it, or an evident Proof of it upon him. But if confiflently with Charity, we may suspect any Men of Atheism, who deny themselves to be Atheilts, we may certainly suspect such Priests, who live viciously; who play with Oaths; who, tho' fwearing to the Government, are Facobites in their Hearts (as Dr. Hickes Yays, I hope falfely, the main Body of the Clergy, God be thanked, are;) who are uncharitable in their Censures, and Persecutors; who defend plain Absurdities a who dispute against the Reasonableness of Reason; who contend formhungan Authority, that is, their own, in Matters of Religion; and argue for the Belief of unintelligible Propositions or Mysteries of For Men of common Sente and common Honesty, can hardly be suppos'd to join real Belief and fuch Things together:) And above all, fuch Priefts, who are constantly charging others with Atheifm (and those ofrentimes the most Learned, Best, and most Religious Men, as Oudworth, Tillot fon, and Lockes) upon whom we may justly return the Charge of Atheifm, in the Words of a modern are SEA

modern Philosopher; How, says he to a high Presbyterian Priest, could you think me an Atheist, undess it were, because sinding your Doubts of the Deity more frequent than other Mens are, you are thereby the apter to fall upon that kind of Reproach? Wherein you are like Women of poor and evil Education, when they scold; amongst whom the readiest disgraceful Word is Whore. Why not Thief, or any other ill Name, but because when they remember themselves, they think that Reproach the likeliest to be true?

be true?

And as many Priests give such Cause of suspicion, so I would fain know what Mr.

Leslie must esteem the Priests of our

liament cannot make an Oath which the Clergy will not take? And whether many of our Clergy must not be esteemed Atheists, according to the Saying of the late Bishop of Worcester, It was a great Providence of God,

Church to be, when he fays, That the Par-

that so many of the Clergy resused the Oaths to the Government, lest People should think there was no such Thing as Religion, and incline to Atheism? And lastly, what can be

thought of the Reverend Author of the Tale of a Tub, a known High Priest; or of the Majority of a Lower House of Convocation, who, in their Representation of the present

State of Religion, with regard to the late extessive Growth of Infidelity, Herefy, and Profaneness, fell upon the truly religious (tho)

erroneous) Books of Mr. Whiston and others,
A a 4 but

but passed over the Tale of a Tub, a Book of a reverend Brother; tho' that Book was the fole open Attack that had been made upon Christianity fince the Revolution, except the Oracles of Reason; and was not inferior in Banter and Malice to the Attacks of CEL-SUS, or JULIAN, OF PORPHYRY, OF LUCIAN? And what can we think of the Majority of another Convocation, which a worthy Member spoke to in these Words, With what Face or Conscience, Mr. Prolocutor, can we offer to complain of the Licentiousness taken by Lay Writers, and yet connive at the like Offences given by the Ministers of our Church ; I doubt greater Offences ? For if all the ill Books against Religion, Scripture, &c. were here packed up together, I would undertake to pick out the worst of them, by pointing at those written by Clergymen, even of the most prophane Drollery, as well as the most ferious Herefy? So that upon the whole, the High-Church Priests seem to me to drive a mighty Benefit from Atheism. They have it chiefly among themselves, and protect one another in it; and thereby have the Profit of Atheilm, ariting from taking false Oaths, and from doing many Things without Scruple of Conscience; as also the Pleasure, as some of them esteem it (See Dr. ATTER-BURY'S Sermon on BENNET'S Funeral) a-rising from the Practice of Vice. And at the same time they themselves stand clear of the Imputation of Atheism, and brand those they do Aaa

The Independent Whig. 361 do not like, with it, who are oftentimes the best Men and best Christians.

P. S. The Author of this Paper having received two very modest and religious, though anonymous Letters, which take Offence at an Expression in the Independent Whig, No. XXXVIII. about godly Sorrow; returns for Answer, That Sorrow for our Sins is not thereopposed, but Mechanic Sorrow, and such as proceeds from wrong Causes; and the Author only supposes that such enthusiastick People, as he has before mentioned, knew not the true Principles of Repentance, which he himfelf has described.

In fine, as to godly Sorrow, Sorrow for Sin; I know it to be so much a religious Duty, that I know there can be no Religion





do not like, with it, who are oftentimes the

NUMBER XLVI

XXXVIII. shout godly sorrow; returns for Anfwer That Sorrow; for our Singistron there on

ceived two very modelt and religious, though

Wednesday, November 30. 1720.

only supposes that such enthusaltic

No PRIESTS inflituted by the Christian Religion.

Will, in this Paper, shew, that there are no Priests or Sacrificers in the Gospel Dispensation, in any other Sense, than as every Christian may be called so, as he offers up to God the Sacrifices of Praises and Thanksgivings, and a pure and contrite Heart; and, in this Respect St. Peter calls all Christians, a spiritual House, an Holy Priestbood, to offer up spiritual Sacrifices, a chosen Generation, a Royal Priestbood, an Holy Nation, a Peculiar People, God's Heritage, or, more properly, God's Clergy.

It is undoubtedly true, that all Power, Superiority, or Distinction amongst Men, must be derived either from the positive Institutions of God, or the Consent and Agree-

ment

ment of one another; and therefore, whoever demands any Authority over others,
their Goods or Pollessions, must support his
Pretences by such Proof as the Nature and
Importance of the Claim requires; and it must
be very glaring and undeniable, when it is
levelled at the temporal and eternal Hap-

piness of all Mankind. Anisga viscoub gri

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It is a severe Circumstance, which acrends those, who oppose receiv'd Opinions, that they must not only contend against popular Prejudices, and long imbibed Notions, against the Interests and Passions of great Numbers of artful and combining Men, but in most Countries against the Weight and Force of Publick Authority. The labouring Oar too will always lie upon you: You must disprove what has no Proof to Support it, and bring Clouds of Arguments to maintain Propositions that are really self-evident; a bare Possibility that you may be mistaken, shall be deemed a full Conviction; and fometimes the clearest Demonstration on your Side, shall be called only carnal and human Knowledge, not to be used about Spiritual Things; and even when the irrefragable Strength of your Reasoning forces Confent, you will have no Thanks for your Pains, but will be esteemed officious and factious, and be faid quieta movere, if by Chance you should escape the Censure of promoting the Cause of Deism or Atheism, and soulis

concess And the Apolle adds were the lith,

However,

Popishly affected Clergy are so enormous, the Gonsequences of them so fatal to Christianity, and the Arguments pretended to be brought from Reason and Authority for their Support, so weak and contemptible; the whole Design and Current of the Gospel being directly against them; that I shall do my utmost totally to demolish and throw down the tottering Building, and shew it has no Foundation in common Sense or Scripture.

No Proposition can be more evident, than that before any positive Institution, every Man must have been his own Priest, and alone must have offered up his own Prayers and Thanksgivings; but when God Almighty instituted the Yewish Dispensation, which consisted of numerous Rites, Ceremonies, and Sacrifices, he also appointed Persons to officiate and execute these Duties for the People as well as for themselves, who were called Priests or Sacrificers, with particular Salaries or Dues annex'd to their Office, and they were to be only chosen out of one Tribe.

Accordingly in the Epistle to the Hebrews, chap. v. v. r. and chap. viii. v. 3. a High Priest is defined as one taken up from amongst Men, and ordained for Men in Things pertaining to God, that he may offer Gifts and Sacrifices for Sins: So that the Business of the Priesthood was for expiating Sin, and reconciling Men to God, by offering Gifts and Sacrifices: And the Apostle adds, verse the 4th, That

That no Man could take this Honour to himfelf, but he which was called of God, as was Aaron, whose Commission was couched in the plainest and most express Words imaginable, and the Peoples Duty and Obedience were prescrib'd even to the minutest Circumstance.

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As the Jewish Rites and Ceremonies were almost endless, and consisted of so many minute Particulars, that it was next to impossible not to commit some Breaches of their Law, therefore God appointed Atonement to be made for the leffer Transgressions of it, by Gifts and Offerings, and the Persons aforefaid to make those Offerings; but for the greater Sins, fuch as Idolatry, Perjury, Murder, Adultery, breaking their Sabbath, &c. no Sin-Offerings or expiatory Sacrifices were allowed; and for this Reason the Apostle, chap. vii. v. 18, 19. argues there is verily a Disannulment of the Commandment going before for the Weakness and Unprofitableness thereof; for the Law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in a better Hope did, by the which we draw nigh unto God.

He adds, chap. ix. v. 9. That Gifts and Sacrifices could not make him that did the Service perfect, as pertaining to the Conscience. And chap. x. v. 4. That it is not possible that the Blood of Bulls and of Goats should take away Sins. And v. 6, 8. That in Burnt-Offerings and Sacrifices for Sins, God has no Pleasure; and he argues from thence, chap. v.

v. 4, 10. and chap, vii from the 11th v. to the 19th, a Necessity that another Priest should arise after the Order of Melchisedeck, which was an higher Order, and that he should be perfect being to become Author of eternal Salvation to all them who obey him) for if Penfection was in the Levitical Priesthood (under which the People received the Law) what need was there that another Priest should arise after the Order of Melchisedeck, and not after the Order of Aaron; for the Priesthood being changed, there is made a Necessity of the Change alfo of the Law. In Troffer Trans obem ed

And then be observes many Differences between our Saviour's and the Jewish Priest-

fuch as Tiblistey, Perittry 1. That this Priest was not made after the Law of a carnal Commandment, but after the Power of an endless Life. I do her bowells

2. That he was made a Priest, not without an Oath, which the Jewish Priests were

not, V. 20, 21.

3. That they were many Priests, because they were not suffer d to continue, by reason of Death; but this Man, because he continueth, hath an unchangeable Priesthood: Wherefore he is able to fave them to the utmost, that come unto God by him, seeing be ever liveth to make Intercession for them, v. 23, 24, 25.

4. That the Law maketh Men High Priefts, which have Infirmity; but such a High Priest became us, who is holy, barmless, undefiled, Separate from Sinners, and made higher than the

the Heavens, who needeth not daily to offer up. Sacrifices, first for his own Sins, and then for the People; for this he did once, when he of-

fer dup himself, v. 26, 27, 28

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festions.

5. That he obtained a more excellent Ministry, by how much he is Mediator of a better Covenant, which was established upon better Promises for if the Covenant had been faultless then should no Place have been Sought for the second; for finding fault with them, saith the Lord I will put my Laws into their Minds, and write them in their Hearts, and they shall not teach every Man his Neighbour, Saying, Know the Lord, for all shall know me from the greatest to the least , for I will be merciful to their Unrighteousness, and their Sins and Intiquities I will remember no more in that he faith, by a New Covenant, he hath made the first Old, and that which decayeth and waxeth Old, is ready to vanish away, chep viii v. 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13. and chap. x, ver. 16, 17. mands, d. o. 10, 11, 11, 1

Rites and bloody Sacrifices of the Law, and shews how far inferior they are to the Blood and Sacrifice of Christ, who not by the Blood of Goats and Calves, but by his own Blood, enter'd at once into the holy Place, having obtained eternal Redemption for us; for if the Blood of Bulls and of Goats, and the Ashes of an Heifer sprinkling the Unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the Flesh, how much more shall the Blood of Christ, who through the Eternal Spi-

rit,

rit, offer'd himself, without Blot, to God, to purge your Consciences from dead Works, to

ferve the living God? v. 12, 13, 14.

7. In chap. 10. he shews the Weakness of the Law-Sacrifices; which being offer'd up Tear by Tear continually, could not make the Comers thereto perfect, for then they would have ceased to have been offer'd, because that the Worshippers, once purged, should have had no more Conscience of Sins. Ver. 1, 2, Then Said he. Lo I come to do thy Will, O God : He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second, by the which Will we are sanctified, through the Offering of Jefus Christ, once for all. Every Priest standing ministring, and offering the same Sacrifices, which can never take away Sins; but this Man, after be offered one Sacrifice for Sins for ever, fet down at the Right Hand of God; for by one Offer ing he hath perfected for ever, them that are fanctified; that is, those who obey his Commands, v. 9, 10, 11, 12, 14. And in v. 18. he tells them, Where Remission of Sins is, there is no more Offerings for Sins. Abould but entil

In the rest of the Chapter, the Apostle exhorts the Hebrews, whom he calls his Brethren, to have the Boldness to enter in with him into the Holiest, by the Blood of Jesus; and having a High Priest over the House of God, to draw near with a true Heart, in full Assurance of having our Hearts sprinkled from an evil Conscience, and our Bodies washed with pure Water, and to hold fast the Profession

fession of our Faith, without wavering; and to consider one another to provoke unto Love, and to good Works; not forsaking the assembling our selves together, as the Manner of some is; but exhorting one another, and so much the more as ye see the Day approaching. And he enforces his Argument, by telling them, that if we sin wilfully after the Knowledge of the Truth, there remaineth no more

Sacrifice for Sins.

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Now in all this Epiftle, where this Matter is fo fully and at large explained, (as well as in many other Parts of Scripture where the Jewish Priesthood, Rites and Ceremonies are plainly abolished) there is not one Word or Hint given of any other to be establish'd upon the Ruins of it. the Chapters I have quoted, no Priest, Sacrificer, Prophet, Mediator, Intercessor, Reconciler, Benedictor, Ambassador, or Spiritual Prince, is once mentioned, but Jesus Christ alone; though one might have expected to have met with him, or to have heard of him here, if there was to have been any fuch Person in Nature. On the contrary, the Apostle himself addresses to the Hebrews as his Equals, and claims no Right, Privilege, or Superiority over them; talks to them always in the Plural Number; nor does he, in the modern Phrase, fay, Pray ye, &c. but joins himself with them in every Act of Love and Duty.

If

If this was the Case of the Hebrews, who were Parties to the Horeb Contract, by which God became their Temporal King; and consequently, they became bound, and Subjects to all the Laws of Moses; the Argument is much stronger in behalf of the Gentiles, who were never any way concerned in the Jewish Priesthood, Rites and Ceremonies; and there must be therefore a very plain and positive Institution and Establishment found out in Scripture, before they can be subjected to it.



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NUMBER OF COURS DIGHT WITH CICENTER

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the Ad of Oveca Elizabeth, which appoints NUMBER XLVII.

Mora and on a consecution and M Combigued to the Sengture Offices, who was

laid to be revived by Vicue of

an Indicution occur, except that of Thiseast

Wednesday, December 7. 1720.

All Priestly Power inconsistent with the Gospel, and renounced by it.

HAVE fully shewn, in my last Paper, that as there is but one Sacrifice in the Christian Religion, so there is but one Sacrificer or Prieft.

who, as our Church declares in the Communion-Service, made one Oblation of himself, and once offer'd up a full, perfect, sufficient Sacrifice, Oblation, and Satisfaction, for the Sins of the whole World; and agreeably to this Declaration, in the 13th Article, the calls the Sacrifices of the Popish Priests, dangerous Deceits, and blasphemous Fables.

I cannot with my best Enquiry find out, that in the whole Christian Religion, there are any new Rites and Ceremonies appointed, or any Offices erected; nor in the Gofpels,

B b 2

pels, Acts or Epiftles, does any thing like an Institution occur, except that of Deacons; which Office is now quite laid aside, unless it may be said to be revived by Virtue of the Act of Queen Elizabeth, which appoints Overseers of the Poor: for as to the modern Ecclesiastical Deacon, he has no Resemblance to the Scripture Officer, who was appointed to serve Tables, upon Complaint of the Grecian Widows, who were neglected in the daily Ministration, which the Apostles were not at Leisure to attend, because of the preaching of the Word, and therefore directed the Congregation to choose others, whose Business it should be. Acts chap. vi.

I shall therefore enquire how the Popish World came to be bleffed with fuch a long Train of spiritual Equipage; and see what can be found in the Scriptures, to warrant or countenance their present Pretensions. In order to it, I shall observe, that Promulgation is of the Essence of a Law, which cannot be without Plainness and Perspicuity: It must not be express'd in doubtful and equivocal Terms: It must not depend upon critical Learning, or different Readings; nor receive its Explanation from the mysterious Gibberish, and unintelligible Jargon of the Schools; but ought to be fuch, as a plain, open, simple-hearted, sincere Man may easily discover, amidst the numerous and contradictory Schemes of the Ecclefiafticks.

any Offices credted; nor in the Goff

pels.

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Weak and corrupt Men may, thro' Ignorance or Defign, frame and enact Laws obfeure and unintelligible; but the Almighty cannot intend to mislead his Creatures, or want proper Words to express his Meaning: Even fuch human Laws as enact Penalties, or restrain the natural Liberty of Mankind, are always construed strictly, and extended no farther than the Letter expresly warrants; and 'tis much more reasonable it should be so understood in divine Laws, upon which the Temporal and Eternal Happiness of all the World depends; not only because of the Importance of the Subject, but as there can be no unwary Omission, or Defect in Words chosen by the Holy Ghost: We may therefore be very fure, that whatever is not expressed in Scripture, plain and clear to common Understandings, was not intended for our Instruction, or can become a Duty.

With our Eyes thus cleared up, we will view those Texts and Parts of Holy Writ, brought together to support this unweildy Fabrick. And here, for some Time, I must beg leave of my Reader, to stand amazed, and be at a Loss, which most to admire, the Stupidity and Acquiescence of the Popish and popishly affected Laity, or the daring Insolence and Impiety of their Ecclesiasticks; that without Reason, or the Appearance of Reason, without Sripture, or the Colour of Scripture, but directly in Desiance of them B b 3

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both, they could be able to form so complear an Empire over the Bodies and Minds of the greatest Part of Christendom; rob them of their Goods and Possessions, and make them Instruments of their own Ruin, hug their Chains, and mortally hate, murther, or ruin

every one who would fet them free.

But before I enter upon a particular Difquifition of the Texts produced, I would first enquire what Benefit can accrue to Chriflianity, by fuch Powers in the Christian Clergy. A Roman Judge is honourably mentioned by Cicero, for always asking cui bono an alledged Action was done; by which he could make some Judgment whether it was done or not, and who did it. The fame is a reasonable Proceeding in this Case; for tho' it is no Objection to the Truth of what God has faid, that it is not agreeable to the Sentiments of weak Men; yet whilft it remains a Question, whether God said it or not, there cannot be a stronger Way of arguing used, than to shew that it is unworthy of the divine Wisdom and Goodness, who can fay nothing which is trifling and impertinent, or make any Ordinances useless or mischievous to his Creatures.

Nothing can come from God, but what is godlike; and therefore when any Number of Men combining together, dare tell me any thing in his Name, of no use to Religion or Virtue, and yet of apparent Advantage to themselves or their Order; I shall always

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believe it to be an Invention of their own, forged to gratify their Ambition and Avarice, and shall ever vindicate the Almighty from

the imputed Calumny. Thous sala pade unds

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Now of what use is it to Religion and Virtue, that the Clergy should always make one another? Whether the Imposition of Hands be esteemed barely a Ceremony, to denote a Person appointed to an Office, or be the Appointment it felf? Or whether he be chosen by laying on of Hands, or by any other Ceremony? Will the same Person, with the fame Qualifications, be a better Man, better Christian, or abler Divine, if he receives his Orders in a direct Line from the Apostles, thro' the Canal of a Popish, High-Church, or Presbyterian Priesthood, or if only from the Civil Magistrate, or Voluntary Societies? Or is it possible to believe, that whilft he is administring the Offices of Religion, and doing the Duties of the Gofpel, the devout Christian People shall loose the Effects of their Piety, and the Benefit of Christ's Promises, for the Defect of any Circumstance, or any Omission or Superfluity in his Adoption, which they could neither prevent nor know? Sure we have not fo learn'd Christ.

Can we suppose that Almighty God should make such an Establishment of Christianity, as must destroy Christianity it self; and put it under the sole Guidance and Direction of a Society of Men, who will have a perpetu-

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al Interest to overturn or pervert it, and e-

ver did fo when they had Power?

What can be suggested more absurd, than than that the good God should fend his Son from Heaven, to teach Virtue and Goodness to Men, to manumit and fer them free from the Superflitions of the Yews, and the Idolatries of the Gentiles; who, whilft upon Earth, should not only disclaim all Power and Dominion himself, but suffer an ignominious Death, to make Mankind happy; and yet fubject them to a Yoke, the most arbitrary and tyrannical in the World, without Redrefs, without Remedy; where the Governours have constant Temptations and Motives to oppress, and the Governed no Means to refift or oppose? For no less than this are the Popish and High-Church Demands upon us, and the inevitable Confequences of their wild and wicked Hypothesis.

If they are an Order of Men appointed directly by God, and have the Government of the Church by divine Right in all Things, which relate to Spirituals, (that is, in all Things wherein their own Interest is concern'd:) If they are to be fole Judges of their own Powers, and what Doctrines they are to teach; that the People are to receive them implicitly, and to submit to and be concluded by their Determinations, and if no human Authority must controul them; which I think those I write against all claim; (tho fearce two of them agree in whose Hands,

or in what Part of the Clergy, these Powers are vested) then its plain, they are possessed of the most despotick, unlimited, and uncontroulable Sovereignty in the Universe, and which of Necessity must prove, and actually ever has proved, the most Cruel and

Tyrannical in the Exercise.

But if they have not this Power, they can have none at all, but what the Civil Magistrate or Voluntary Societies trust them with; for, what is the Name of a Power, which every Man is a Judge whether he will fubmit to, or not? Or how can that be faid to be Divine, which the Civil Magistrate can controul at his Pleasure? There can be no Medium in Nature betwixt another's judging for me, and my judging for my felf: If another is to judge for me, I must submit to his Determinations, let them be ever fo abfurd, monstrous or wicked; but if I have a Right to re-examine them, they can amount to no more than Advice, and my own Judgment alone must determine me.

As I think I have amply proved that 'tis inconfistent with the Goodness of God to trust the Powers so claimed with the Popish Clergy; so in my two next Papers, I will as fully prove that, in Fact, he has given them

no Authority at all.

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Indeed, to do them Right, the Popish Priests do not pretend to offer any direct Texts to their Purpose, expressing particularly the Powers given them, and the Persons

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in whom they are to be vested; as might be reasonably expected in a Case so nearly assecting the Liberties of all Mankind; and was actually done in the Jewish Dispensation, where every Circumstance relating to their Worship and the Priest's Office was minutely described; but instead thereof, they pick up scatter'd and disjointed Sentences, and set them together by the Ears, to try what they can get by the Scusse: They argue from Types, Antitypes, Parables, Metaphors, Allegories, Allusions, Inferences, Patterns, Resemblances, Figures and Shadows, and by such Means can setch every Thing out of e-

very Thing.

The Bible is a Miscellanious Book, from whence craz'd or defigning Men, by joining or disjoining; by various Readings, corrupt or ignorant Translations; by far-fetch'd Interpretations, and putting different Meanings upon Words in Scripture from what they fignify in any other Parts of Language; by trifling and knavish Distinctions, metaphysical Subtilties, no Definitions, but shifting the Significations of Words as they have Occafion; by References to ancient Customs, and Twenty other Theological Systems of Reafoning, may always fetch Materials to ferve their loofe or wicked Purpofes; as we actually find an Hundred different, and many of them almost contradictory, Religions are pretended to be deduced from that Book; and if the Priests were let alone, they would find

find a Thousand more, and burn for them all. (I mean other People.) But if Men would be contented to judge of the Gospel Style. by the same Rule as they do of other Writings: If they could be perswaded that God Almighty, when he condescends to make use of human Language, intends to be understood, and consequently uses Words in their common Acceptation; that when he defigned to reveal his Will to Babes and Sucklings (that is, to the Ignorant and Unlearned) he did not chuse to do it in Riddles, to make Way for Interpreters, and that the Popish Clergy might have a Pretence for picking the Laity's Pockets; then I affirm, that the Bible is the plainest, openest, most moral, significant and intelligible Book in the World, in all Things which can be the Dury of a Man to know; and in no Part of it more fo, than in the present Dispute, which has been rendered so perplex'd and intricate by Crast and Artifice: And I undertake in my two next Papers to make this out.



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NUMBER XLVIII.

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Wednesday, December 14. 1720.

The same Subject continu'd.

HERE is nothing in the Four Gof-T pels to authorize or countenance the Distinction of Ecclesiastical and Civil; for as our Saviour renounced all worldly Power himfelf, fo he gave none. He neither used, nor allowed the Use of Force and Violence, to coerce and conquer Subjects to his Kingdom, which he declared was not of this World. As the Religion he taught was not to confift of outward Actions and Ceremonies, like the Worship of the Gentiles, but was to reside in the Mind, so he chose proper Means to attain his End: He knew the Sword might make Hypocrites and Slaves, but never Converts; therefore he instructed his Apostles to win Mens Affection by Love and Gentleness, to allure them by Example, and convince them by NUMBER

by the Reasonableness of his Precepts, and he enabled them to prove their Mission by Wonders and Miracles; all which are directly contrary to the Proceedings of Mahomet, whose Aim was Temporal Dominion, and his Religion Imposture; and consequently Violence was necessary to propagate Both: for Absurdity can no Way be supported but by Tyranny; but Truth can ever defend it self, and desires nothing but a fair Examination, a free Hearing and equal Fayour.

He takes every Occasion to caution his Apostles against spiritual Pride, and claiming Superiority over others, or one another: The Powers he gave them were of another Kind, such as were proper to overcome the Prejudices of the innocent and well-meaning, tho missed People; and to confound the Malice and Subtilty of the governing Priesthood, (viz.) A Power against unclean Spirits, and to cast them out; to heal all manner of Sickness, and all manner of Diseases; and to raise the Dead. Sure no Clergyman pretends to these Powers.

He bids them provide neither Silver, nor Gold, nor Brass, in their Pockets; nor Skrip for their Journey; neither Two Coats, nor Shoes, nor Staves: Much less Coaches. I presume no Clergymen desires these Powers.

He orders them when they come into any House, to salute it; and if they do not receive them, and hear their Words, to depart from that House,

House, and shake off the Dust of their Feet. The Popish Clergy are for setting Fire to such an House, (as they did lately to several) and for burning and damning every one within it.

Christ to all Nations, in Matthew; and in Mark, to go into all the World, and to preach bim to every Creature. The Popith Priest stays at Home, and preaches himself only, to his

own Parish for Money.

Those who believed in the Apostles, and were baptized, had the Power of casting out Devils in Christ's Name, and speaking with new Tongues: They could take up Serpents; no deadly Thing they drank could hurt them; they laid Hands upon the Sick, and they recovered. Those who believe in the Popish Priest are the best Friends the Devil has; and instead of casting him out, for the most Part bring him in: They can speak Sense with no Tongue; nor dare venture on any Poison, but what proceeds from Gluttony and Drunkenness, with which they give their Votaries Diseases, instead of recovering them.

The Apostles were to be Witnesses of all which they had heard or seen said or done by our Saviour; and who else could be so? But the Popish Priest has no other Means of knowing Christ, than any Layman of equal Abilities and equal Application; nor can have any greater Motive or Inducement to preach him, except his Hire; which, as it

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first suborn'd his Predecessors to betray his Person, and take away his Life, so it has ever since been the Occasion of Crucifying him a-new, by misrepresenting his Doctrines, and making them subservient to worldly Ambition and Interest; which is so universal, that no Englishman can set his Foot out of his own Country, but he sees the Clergy perverting the Scripture, and abusing the

People.

Our Saviour himself appointed the Seventy Disciples, whom he fent before him Two by Two, in every Place where he intended himself to go, and gave them Powers almost equal to the Powers of the Apostles, (viz.) to heal the Sick, to tread on Serpents and Scorpions, and over all the Power of the Enemy, and that nothing should burt them; but he was so far from giving any worldly Authority, that he tells them, he sends them forth as Lambs among st Wolves ; that they should carry nothing with them, but what soever House they came into, they sould fay, Peace to that House, and should eat and drink such Things as the People gave them; and whatever City they came into, they should eat such Things as were set before them, for the Labourer is worthy of his Hire; (here it feems the People were to judge what Wages and Hire they deserve) and if any Persons refused to receive them, they were to go into the Streets, and shake off the Dust of their Feet at them; which was all the Excommunication they were directed to use, and was nothing

thing else but to leave them in their Sins,

and preach to them no longer.

Whatever is meant by the figurative and abstruse Texts of binding and loosing, remitting and retaining Sins, is evidently confined to those it is spoken to, and seems to have Relation to the other World alone.

Now I would be glad to know by what Rules of Construction can the Powers, now claimed by any Sett of Clergy in the World, be brought from these Texts, or in what Sense can any Clergyman be said to be a Successor of the Apostles, more than every

Layman of equal Qualifications.

If our Saviour had intended to have conveyed down any Powers to any Man, or Set of Men whatsoever, it is impossible to believe but he would have expressed himself in the fullest and most significant Words; and lest no doubt behind him what those Powers were, and to whom they belonged. No Statute enacted amongst weak Mortals is penned so loosly: What Lawyer in Westminster-Hall could have found out Sovereign Power in the Precept, Feed my Sheep? Or in our Saviour's Promise to assist the Apostles and perhaps all Christians in general, in these Words, I will be with you to the End of the World?

The Priests of Delphos uttering, for the most part, their Oracles in forry and balderdash Poetry, gave Rise to a waggish Jest amongst the Ancients, viz. that Homer could write

write better Verses than Apollo, who inspired him. But sure no one among Christians will be so profane, as to give Occasion to the Suggestion, that the Attorney-General can draw up a clearer and more intelligible

Commission than the Apostles.

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ild ite But the there is nothing in the Gospels to justify or excuse the priestly Demands upon the Laity, yet there are many Texts exprestly against them, in which our Saviour disclaimed all Authority over Men, and forbids his Disciples and Followers assuming Superiority over their Brethren, or censuring, judging, or using any one ill, for not receiving, or for opposing them.

declares, If any Man hears his Words, and believes not, that he will not judge him so for the World. But to faves the World. And in the next Verfe, leaves, him to the Judgment of the Father, and tells him what will be his Doom.

o In John, chap xviii v. 36 he was brought before Pilate for speaking Treason against Cafar, and claiming the Temporal King dom of Judea, and he took that Occasion to renounce all earthly Sovereignty, by declaring, His Kingdom was not of this World's C c and

and gave his Reason for it; which so satisfy'd the Roman Governour, ever jealous of his Master's Authority, that he pronounced him innocent, and would gladly have released him, if the Jewish Priests would have suffered it.

In Matthew, chap vii. v. 1, 2, 3, he fays to his Disciples, Judge not, lest ye be judged; for with what Judgment ye judge ye shall be judged, and what Measure ye meet shall be

measured to you again, &contra lla bemissionis

In Luke, chap ix v. 53. James and John defired of him, that they might command Fire from Heaven to punish the Samaritans for not receiving him; which he was so far from consenting to, that he reproves them for it; and tells them, Te know not what Spirit ye are of, for the Son of Man is not come to destroy the World, but to save the World.

In the same Chapter, John said to him, Master, we saw one casting out Devils in thy Name, and we forbid him, because he followeth not with us. And Jesus said, Forbid him not, for he that is not against us, is for us. A plain Precept for Christians to tolerate one

him to the Judement of the Lath nations

Thro' the whole xvisith Chapter of Matthew, our Savious exhorts his Disciples to be humble, and to forgive Offences. And in the 15th Verse tells them, If thy Brother trespass against thee, go and tell him his Fault between thee and him alone; but if he will not hear thee, take one or two more with thee, &c.

and if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it to the Church, or Congregation: And if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be to thee like a Heathen or Publican; that is, have no more to do with him. And in the two Verses after, he tells them what a Church is, viz. When two or three are gathered together in my Name, I will be in the midft of them; and bis Presence, methinks, should be effectual to constitute a compleat Church, tho'a Parson is not one of the Company. I 300019 aids

Indeed the whole New Testament is a Lesson of Humility, Humanity and Morality; the Sermon upon the Mount is nothing elfe; and we every where find constant Precepts and Cautions against Pride and Do-

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In the xxiiid of Matthew, our Saviour spake to the Multitude, and to his Disciples. bidding chem not to be called Master, for one is your Master, even Christ, all ye are Brethren; but he that is greatest umongst you, shall be your Servant; and whoever does exalt himself, shall be abased; and he that shall humble himfelf, shall be exalted,

In Luke, chap. xx. v. 46. he warns his Disciples to beware of the Scribes, who defire to walk in long Robes, and love Greetings in the Markets, and the highest Seats in the Synagogues, and the chief Places at Feasts, (hear, O ye Popish Bishops, Priests and Deacons'h who devour Widows Houses, and for a Shew ginatricky incan them.

make long Prayers.

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In Luke xxii. v, 24, 25, 26. There was a Strife amongst the Apostles which should be the greatest. And Jesus said unto them, The Kings of the Gentiles exercise Authority over them; and they that exercise Authority upon them, are called Benefactors. But ye shall not be so; but he that is greatest amongst you, let him be as the Younger; and be that is Chief, as he that does serve. The same in Matthew, chap, xx v. 25, 26, 27. And he enforces this Precept in Verse 28. from his own Conduct, viz. Even as the Son of Man same not to be ministred unto, but to minister.

Our Saviour did not dike others, preach Doctrines to his Disciples which he refused to practife but teaches them Modesty and Humility by his own Example: For in the 13th of John he serofhes their Feet himself. and bids them wash one another's. How different is this from the proud Spirit of his pretended Successors, who take Place of the Nobility and Gentry, and make the great Men of the Earth kifs their Slippers : falute them upon the Knee, as if they were Gods below, or Sovereign Princes; nay more, fer themselves above the Crown it felf , for what is it elfe they mean after faying Grace, and in their Cups by putting the Church (by which they mean Themselves) before the King and Royal Family & We alkaknow roo well their Kindness for the People (who are the Scriptural and Legal Church) to suspect Not In

Not many Years since, the constant Health amongst them was, King, Queen, and Church; but now all the High Clergy are guilty of the same Crime for which Cardinal Woolsey ought to have lost, and in all Likelihood would have lost his Head, if he had not prevented it, as it is said, by Self-Murther, viz. of setting themselves above the Crown, and viva voce, crying out, Ego & Rex meus, when they are in the Humour of owning him as such.

I shall hereafter write a Paper on Purpose on this Subject; but in my next shall shew, that the Acts and Epistles no more favour their wild Presentions than the Gospels.



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Number XLIX.

Wednesday, December 21. 1720.

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An Inquiry into Religious Establishments, with a further Confutation of the impious and absurd Claims of High Priests.

O many are the various and contradictory Opinions and Reasonings of Men, that no voluntary Society or Assembly can act, or long hold together without establishing certain Rules and Orders amongst themselves, regarding the Common Interests and Conduct of the Society, and appointing Persons whose Duty it shall be, to see those Orders put in Execution; and if any Member does not think it lawful or expedient to submit to the publick Regulations, they must have a Right to exclude him, or in other Words, to excom-

excommunicate him from their Body, if he

does not chuse to separate himself.

If the Defign of the Meeting is to worthip God, to join in the same Prayers, and for Exhortation and Edification, (which Affembly is called a Church) there must be Time and Place appointed when, and where, they are to meet, and Persons to prepare and keep in order all Things necessary for their meeting: There must be one, or more, appointed to read those Prayers to the Congregation; in which they are to join, and to do all those Offices, which can be performed only by fingle Persons; and if the Society would avoid the Loquacity and Interruption of ignorant and conceited Members, they must confine Exhortation to one, or to a few Perfons of approved Gravity and Wildom. There must be also some Means of conferring and agreeing together, to fupport the common Expences of Buildings, Repairs, Utenfils, &c. and confequently, there must be Debates, which cannot well be carried on without a President, Chairman, or Prolocutor, to regulate them, collect their Voices, and pronounce their Refolutions; without which Precautions they will be more likely to fight than pray.

If several of these Churches, residing at too great a Distance from one another to meet together, should esteem it their Duty or Advantage to join in the same Form of Worship, and unite in a common Interest to support it, they must find out some Means of Commu-

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nication, and contrive some Cement of their Union, otherwise they would soon separate again; This may be done by chufing Deputies to represent them, and concert common Measures, or by submitting themselves to the Conduct and Determinations of one, or more Persons, chosen by common Consent, in all fuch Matters as do not interfere with their Duty to God; and the Perfons fo chofen can have no more Power, nor of longer Duration, than their Principals think fit to

give them.

If these Churches think it their Duty or Interest to enlarge their Bottom, and make Converts, they cannot take a more effectual Method to do it, than to choose, appoint, or ordain discreet and honest Men, who are acquainted with their Way of Worship, their Ordinances, and the Reasons of them, and fend them forth to teach, persuade, and convince others; to exhort them with Meekness and Love, (the likeliest Way to gain them) and afterwards to prefide and watch over them, and thereby prevent their Straying

and Apostatizing, This was the Case in the Beginnings of Christianity, before National Churches were established, as well as the present Case of independent, voluntary Societies. The Apo-files Commission was, To go into all the World, and preach Christ to every Creature. Which was impossible for them to do in their own Persons; and therefore as they made Converts,

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verts, they exhorted them to convert others, as Acts viii. v. 1, 4. When the Apostles were left at Ferusalem, the Church was scattered abroad through all Judæa and Samaria, and those who were scattered abroad preached the Word. Acts xi. v. 13, 14. They that were Scattered abroad upon the Persecution that arose about Stephen, travelled as far as Phoenice und Cyprus, and preached the Word to none but the Jews only; and some of them when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus Christ, Chap, iv. v. Peter and John converted Five Thousand. And v. 31. They were all filled with the Holy Ghoft, and they Spake the Word of God with

Boldness.

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And they were all enabled to prove their Mission, by having the Power of working Miracles; for Mark xvi. w. 17, 18, these Signs were to follow those who believed in Christ's Name. They could cast out Devils; they could Speak with new Tongues; they could take up Serpents; no deadly Thing could burt them; they could lay their Flands on the Sick, and recover them. John, chap. xxiv. v. 12. Our Saviour fays to his Disciples, Whoever believeth in me, the Works that I do Shall be do, and greater than these shall he do: Which Gifts would have been unnecessary, if they had been to have made no Use of them; and by Virtue of these general Powers given to all Christians, Philip and Stephen, who were chosen by the Congregation to the menial Office of ferving Tables,

Tables, preached, baptized, and did many Wonders and Miracles, Acts, chap. vi. v. 8.

chap. viii. v. 7.

But besides the common Right which every Man had to preach Christ, and propagate his Kingdom, the Apostles prevailed with particular Persons to undertake it, and make it their Bufiness, who were to affift and overfee the Brethren, as a Shepherd does his Sheep: Having the Gift of differning Spirits, they knew who were fittest for the Employment, and who would engage in it without any finister Views; but 'tis plain, they gave no Gifts or Advantages to them above other Christians. They could not give the Holy Ghost; which Power was confined to the Apostles alone, and, as far as appears, was bestowed without Distinction upon all who believed and were baptized.

The Power of speaking with Tongues, as is abovesaid, was given to all Believers; which appears to be in Scripture, one constant and inseparable Mark of having receiv-

ed the Holy Ghost.

In Acts the 2d, v. 4. The Holy Ghost fell on the Apostles, and they spake with Tongues. In Acts x. v. 46. While Peter spoke, the Holy Ghost fell on all who heard the Word, and the Jews were astonished when they beard the Gentiles speak with Tongues. Chap. xix. v. 6. Paul lays his Hands on certain Disciples, and the Holy Ghost came on them, and they spake with Tongues, and prophesied. Acts the xith. v. 15.

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Peter justifying himself to the Jews, for preaching to the Gentiles, Tays, And as I began to Speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them as on us at the Beginning. Then remembred I the Word of the Lord, how that he faid, John indeed baptized with Water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost; for as much therefore as God gave them (viz. those who believed) the like Gift as he did to us, who believed in the Lord Jefus Christ, what was I that I should withstand God? So that here, from the Mouth of Peter himself we have it. that the Gentiles who believed, had the fame Gift as the Apostles. Chap. viii. v. 14. When the Apostles at Jerusalem had heard that the Samaritans bad received the Word, they fent to them Peter and John, who laid Hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghoft, which they had not received before, tho' they were baptized by Philip. In chap. ii. v. 38. Peter says to them of Israel, Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the Name of Jesus Christ, for the Remission of Sins, and ye shall receive the Holy Ghoft; and v. 41. They gladly received the Word, and the same Day were added to them about Three Thousand Souls, who must have all consequently received the Holy Ghost. Chap. viii. v. 8, 9. Paul speaking of the Gentiles, fays, God which knoweth the Hearts, bear them Witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us, and put no Difference between them and us, purifying their Hearts by Faith. There-

Therefore it appears plain to me, that all who believed, especially by the Apostles Ministration, received the Holy Ghost, and could do Miracles; and confequently, the Perfons aforefaid, by whatever Names they are called, were not defigned to be an Order of Men diffinct from other Christians, with different Powers and Privileges. They undertook a Burthen, not a Command. They were better and poorer than other People, nor their Lords and Masters; nor is there a Word in Scripture, whereby we can guess that they were intended to be Successors to the Apofiles, much less than the Successorship was to continue to the End of the World; and tis evident in Fact, that there were no fuch appointed, because the Power of giving the Holy Ghoft, and in Confequence of doing Miracles, foon ceafed in the Church. Will Voll

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With this View, let us now examine the Atts and Epiftles, and see what there is which

contradicts it. I all the your to every here

Acts xiv. v. 23. Paul and Barnabas ordained Elders in every City; and chap. xx. v. 17. Paul calls the Elders of the Church of Ephefus together; and v. 28. tells them their Duty, (viz.) Take heed therefore unto your selves, and to all the Flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you Overseers, to feed the Church of God, which he hath purchased with his own Blood. Here, luckily, the Word Episcopas is translated Overseer, and not Bishop, because it is explained in the Text, to import no

that is, to affift them, to preach to them, to exhort them, to advise them, and give them good Examples; but all this implies no Jurisdiction, nor had the Apostles any to

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Thessalonians, chap. V. V. 12. And we beseech you, Brethren, to know them which labour amongst you, and are over you in the Lond,
and admonish you. Here Paul, with all Humility, entrears the Thessalonians, that they
will know, that is, take Notice of, and
hearken to, those who labour for their Sakes,
who watch over them, and admonish them
to mend their Lives.

Ephesians, chap. iv. v. 7, 11. Unto every me is given Grace, according to the Measure of the Gift of Christ; and he gave some Apor fles; and some Prophets; and some Evangelifts; and some Pastors and Teachers; and in the next Verse tells for what (viz.) for the perfecting the Saints, (shat is, all the Faithfol a for the Work of the Ministry, and for the edifying the Body of Christ. Romans, chap. x. v. 14, 15. How then Shall they call upon him in whom they have, not be lieved? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how wall they bear without a Preacher? And how Iball they preach unless they be fent? This relates plainly to the Teaching of the Apostles, who were fent to preach the Gospel to the unconverted World, what otherwise could have known 6322

known nothing of it, and possibly in a larger Sense may be extended to all Christians, who had the Power as well as the Means to preach it, and consequently might be said to be sent to do it; but I should be glad to know, by what Skill in Chymistry it has been discovered, or how it came to be guessed, that the Clergy of the many Nations in Europe, as by Law severally established, were the Persons meant; or if only one fort of them, which that is; when its plain, they have no other Means of knowing Christ than the Lairy have, and for the most part can tell them no more than they knew before.

Hebrews, chap. xiii. v. 7. Remember them which have the Rule over you, who have spoken unto you the Word of God, whose Faith follow, considering the end of their Conversation: And, v. 17. Obey, by others translated, be persuaded by them that have the Rule over you, and submit your selves; for they watch for your Souls, as those who must give Account. Here it seems the Editors of our English Bible do not think fit to stand to their Translations; for in the Margent, against the Words Rule over you, in both Verses, they have inserted the Word Guides, which does not give us altogether so frightful an Image.

The Word translated Obey in the last Verse, is explained by the Word Remember in the first; and the Reason given in the One is, because you are to consider the End of their Conversation; and in the other is, because they

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watch for your Souls; so that the Hebrews were exhorted to remember, hearken to, or be persuaded by their Guides, who had spoke to them the Word of God, which was the End of their Conversation, and who watched for their Souls: And, I think, all good Christians ought to do so still, when they know where to find them, and the Clergy have agreed a

mongst themselves who they are.

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At the latter end of the second Epistle to Timothy, in our Edition of the Bible, he is faid to be the first Bishop of Ephesus, by which, we are to understand, if we please, that he was in Pollellion of the Authority and Dignity of a Modern Prelate; but the Text fays no fuch Matter: Indeed Paul's ift Epifile, chap. 1. v. 11. fays, that the Glorious Gospel of Christ was committed to his Trust. that is, he was intrusted to preach it. And, v. 18. he commits the same Charge to Timothy: But in chap. iv. v. 12, 13. he tells him what he is to do (viz.) he is to be an Example to the Believers in Word, in Conversation, in Charity, in Faith, in Purity; and till he comes himself, he is to give Attendance to Reading, to Exhortation, to Doctrine; and the rest of the Epistle is spent in telling him what Docattack Memor deartons trine he is to preach.

In his 2d Epistle, Paul says unto him, And the Things thou hast heard from me amongst many Witnesses, the same commit thou to faith ful Men, who shall be able to teach others all so; which he expresses summarily before, in

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Man; a Geremony always used amongst the Jews, to denote a Person appointed for any Purpose, as well as on many other Occasions; so that Paul himself knew, by Inspiration, who was sit for his Charge, and Timothy was to make good Enquiry after faithful Men: But there is no Power here given but to preach the Gospel, and to employ others to do it; which I have shewn every one was at liberty to do, tho all had not an equal Call, or were equally qualified for it; and therefore it was certainly good Advice to endeavour to find out such as were, and prevail upon them to undertake it.

In the Epiffle to Titus, who it feems was another Bishop, he is directed to set in order the Things which are wanting (the Business amongst us of Church Wardens and Vestry. Men) and to ordain Elders in every City, as Paul had appointed him; which alludes to private Directions before given, and proves now thing, but that Paul took the best Precautions and most prudent Measures to propagate Christianity, by reducing his Converts in every City, into orderly, though voluntary Societies, by finding out and appointing difcreet and honest Men to assist and superintend the rest; and it cannot be doubted but the People who knew him to be inspired, would be advis'd by him, accept his Recommendations, and confequently hearken to, trust their Affairs, and be directed by the Wildom of thefe

of Persons so powerfully recommended; which Respect and Deserence has been always paid by every Sect that ever appeared in the World to their first Founders, and for the most part to their after Leaders too.

These are all the Texts that I can at prefent remember, which are usually brought to support the Priestly Claims, except such as plainly relate to our Saviour himself, or his Apostles; but if any others occur hereafter, I shall take Notice of them in proper Time.

But what has all this to do with a formal and solemn Institution, and established Form of Government, a Political Oeconomy, or in Ecclesiastical Language and Stile, a Spiri-

tual Hierarchy?

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What, must sovereign and independent Power, (without which, as I have shewn in my 48th Paper, there can be in this Case no Power at all) depend upon figurative Expressions, and Allusions to Seniority of Age, as Elders; to mean and low Professions, as Guides, Shepberds, Pastors, Teachers, Overseers, notably translated Bishops? Or upon the critical Knowledge of antient Eastern Terms, of doubtful and disputed Significations, which would put it in the Power of the very sew Men said to be skilled in the Oriental Tongues (which, for the most Part lick out all their Brains) to settle what Establishments or Religion they please.

The Prophets and Evangelists often speak after the Manner of the Eastern Nations,

D d which

which was for the most Part figurative: where, for ever, to the End of the World, and fuch like Language, was frequently used to denote a long Space of Time, and therefore general Expressions in Scripture are not always to be taken strictly, as Covetousness is the Root of ALL Evil: Swear not ATALL: Children and Servants obey your Parents and Masters in ALL things. Take no Care for to Morrow: Take no Thought's for your Life, what you shall eat, what you shall drink, or what you shall put on: Whatever you ask of my Father in my Name, he will give it you. Submit your selves to one another: Te younger be subject to the elder; yea be subject to one another: And there were many other Things which Jesus did, the which if they should be written, the whole World could not contain the Books; and more than an hundred others of the fame kind. When fuch Passages occur, we must construe them by the Rules of Eternal Righteousness, the Reason of the Thing, and the general Bent of Scripture, and then we cannot mistake their Meaning, but in such Cafes as are of no Consequence, whether we do or not disputed Signification to ob sw

Besides, almost all Words vary their Meaning by Time, and every one of the least reading, knows that there is scarce a Word in Nature, (except the proper Names of Persons, Places, and Things) that is answer'd by any other in a different Language, so as to comprehend exactly the same Number of Ideas; nor is it pro-

Nation ever used one such Word minutely to the same Purpose; but if they were ask'd to give an adequate Definition of what they meant by it, would differ in some Particular: therefore tis absurd to suppose that Mens Duty and Erernal Salvation should depend upon the nice Signification of single Hebrew and Greek Words; Languages so long since out

of common Use, and dead.

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The Almighty is too merciful to his Creatures to leave them at fuch Uncertainties, which is in effect to let them throw Cross and Pile for their Religion: When he makes an Establishment, and gives Laws to Mankind, he always expresses himself in a manner not to be mifunderstood; so he did in the Jewish Dispensation, where there was no dispute about the Meaning of their Law; though there is nothing in Scripture to countenance these Pretensions, yet the Gospel almost every where forbids them, as I have partly shewn in my last Paper, and shall unanswerably make out hereafter, when I shall more fully consider the Acts and Epistles; and then I will shew that the Apostles themselves claim'd no Authority over other Christians, or any Power but of Perswasion. I shall endeavour to shew what is meant by Baptism and the Lord's Supper; and do undertake to prove, that the Clergy have no more Power from Scripture to administer them than Women and Laymen, and that nothing is meant them,

by Excommunication, but not keeping ill Company: I will shew too that the Clergy, in the first Ages of Christianity, were always chosen by the People, and lived upon their Alms, and by what Steps of Impiety and Forgery the Popish Priesthood came to be Lords of so great a Part of the Terrestrial Globe.

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Saturday, December 24. 1720.

Of the Three High-Churches in England.

AVING in my former Papers given and Account of the Mall, in this, give an Account of the Three High Churches in England, which are very different from it. And tho in order to this, I shall be obliged to take in a good deal of Matter, and reveal many High-Church and Jacobite Secrets; yet, I hope to give the Town a clear Notion of them,

them, in the Compass of one Paper. I shall, First, state what the true Church of England is; and then describe the Three High-Churches of England, shewing how they differ from one another, and from the true Church of

England to be established by

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I. First, What the true Church of England is. All Churches by Law establish'd, are Creatures of that State, where they are fo establish'd. For whatever is establish'd, necessarily depends on the Legislature, which can and does repeal and enact whatever it thinks fit, and always calls its present Constitution in Religion, The Church by Law establist'd. The Church of England therefore by Law establish'd, is whatever the Legislature has enacted, and continues in Force, in relation to Religion, together with whatever is enjoined by the Authority of the King, or is determin'd by the proper Judicatories, acting by the Authority of, and in Subordination to, the Legislature. Thus the Act of Parliament requiring the Subscription of the Thirty-nine Articles; the Acts of Uniformity, and the Act of Toleration; the King's Injunctions, the Canons of Convocation confirm'd by the King; the Sentences of the Delegates, and the Determinations of the House of Lords, constitute the Church of England: And the Members thereof are good and true Members, who conform their Belief and Practice to the several Particulars aforesaid: As on the other side, they fall Dd3

fhort of being good and true Members, who recede from any Particular establish'd and fertled as aforefaid. Nor can those be truly faid to agree with and conform to a Church, who do not agree with and conform to it in the Sense intended by the Makers of the several Constitutions of that Church. This last is forplain a Truth in it felf, and fo manifestly imply'd in taking all Oaths, and making Subscriptions and Declarations, that it would have been needless to have observed it, had it not been for the Equivocation and Jesuitism of fo many of our Priests, who think they may take Oaths, and make Subferiptions, in Senses contrary to, and different from, the Intention of the Imposers, and yet be good, and true, and perfect Members of in relation to Religion, together david salt

from this Establishment, are Three in Number; which I shall rank under the Names of the most remarkable Leaders in them. 1. Dr. Bungey's High-Church. 2. Mr. Lesley's High-Church. 3. And Dr. Brett's High-Church. The Two last are in an open Separation from one another, as well as from the true Church of England. But Dr. Bungey's High-Church has as yet made no Separation from the True Church. He and his People are only Schismaticks in the Church, (as were those upon whom St. Paut charges Schism, when they were met together in the same Church, in Cor. xi. 18.) being as his present Grace

of Canterbury describes some High-Church Priests, a new Sort of Disciplinarians risen up among our selves, who seem to comply with the Government of the Church, as others do with that of the State; not out of Conscience of their Duty, or any love they bear to it, but because they cannot keep their Preferments without it: They hate our Constitution, and revile all such as stand up in good earnest for it; and yet, for all that; go on to Subscribe and Rail; which Passage, from so great an Authority, eannot be too often quoted.

But to proceed to the Description of these

Three High-Churches, in their Order.

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1. Dr. Bungey's High-Church stands distinguish'd from the True Church of England; by their Arminian Doctrines, contrary to our old Orthodox Calvinistical Articles; by their Enmity to the Act of Toleration, and to the Principles on which it is grounded; by their claiming an Independent Power in Priests to make Laws, and govern the Church; which is contrary to the Laws of England, that place the Power of making Church-Laws in other Hands, and particularly contrary to the Oath of Supremacy, which makes his Majesty Supreme Head of the Church; by teaching the Doctrines of Hereditary Right and Passive Obedience, contrary to the Judgment and Practice of the Legislature at and fince the Revolution, and to the Determination of the House of Lords, on the Impeachment of Dr. SACHEVEREL, and Dd4 their

their Condemnation of the Oxford Decree; and by a Spirit of Faction against the present Establishment in State, and against his Majesty's Measures; by Rebellion and Perjury, by Uncharitableness to all Foreign, and more especially to Domestick Protestants; and by an implacable Fury and Malice towards all Dissenters among us, besides Jews and Papists: In which they act contrary to the known loyal Principles of our Church; to its Opinion of all Foreign Protestant Churches, which it esteems true Churches; to its Principles, which all tend to preserve Liberty and Property; and to its known charitable and peaceable Temper, and Regard to tender Consciences.

2. The Second High-Church is Mr. LES-LEY'S High-Church. At the Revolution feveral Bishops, who were deprived by Act of Parliament, for not taking the Oaths to the Government, made an open Separation from the Church of England; and pretended, that they and their Adherents were the Church, charging those who fill'd their Sees with being Usurpers, and feeting up Altar against Altar; and also charging them and their Adherents, together with all the other Bishops, Clergy and Laity, who join'd in the fame Communion with the usurping Bishops, with Schifm. Hereby also they distinguish themfelves in Principles from the Church of England; which, being a legal Establishment, afferts to the Legislature, which has a Right to preserve their Peace, a Right to deprive Biripdi

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Bishops for Crimes against Law. They do not indeed so much distinguish themselves in Principles from Dr. Bungey's Church, as they do from the true Church of England: For the Doctor's Church equally contends with Mr. Lesley's Church against the Parliament's Right to deprive Bishops, and calls it Usurpation on the Rights of the Church; but is for Submission to such usurp'd Exercise of Power; and contends, Schism to be on the Side of those, who separate on a Principle of defending the Rights of the Church, against an Usurpation of those Rights.

This new separate Church agrees with Dr. Bungey's Church, in the other Principles before-mention'd, which distinguish the Doctor's Church from the true Church of England. But in Point of Honesty, or Adherence to those Principles, it greatly differs from the Doctor's Church, which goes on to Subscribe, and swear, and practise contrary to what they do subscribe and swear; Mr. Lesley's High Church honestly practising in several Respects according to its villanous

Principles.

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3. Proceed we now to Dr. Brett's High-Church. Soon after King George's Accession to the Crown, the Bishops of the last mention'd High-Church did all, except one, assemble in a Synod, where they resolv'd upon making Four Alterations in the Common Prayer Book, viz. 1. To mix Water with the Wine in the Sacrament. 2. A Prayer for the Dead.

Dead. 3. A Prayer for the Descent of the Holy Ghost, upon the Bread and Wine in the Sacrament. 4. An Oblatory Prayer; which goes upon the Ground, that the Eucharist is a proper Sacrifice. All which Dr. Brett is not only an Advocate for, as an Author, but (perhaps) as Titular Archbishop of Canterbuty exercised his Authority in ensoining. This has split the last High Church into two Churches; Dr. Brett and his Followers adhering to the Bishops, or Church Governors of their Church, in Behalf of Wine and Water, &c. and Mr. Lesley and his Followers adhering to one Bishop only, in Behalf of Wine, &c. contrary to the Determination of their own Bishops, and all their own Principles, about the Authority of Bishops and Clergy.

To render my Account of our feveral High-Churches of England more compleat; I shall, by Way of Supplement, observe, that there is a Distinction in Dr. Bungey's Church; and his High-Church may be divided into two High-Churches. Some of his High-Church are Swearers to the Government, and fay the Church Prayers for his Majesty King GEORGE and his Family, continuing at the same Time disaffected to him, and Enemies to his Legal Title. Others of the Doctor's High-Church are Non-fwearers; and, tho' they come to the Church, difown joining with the Swearers in the Prayers for the King and his Family; whose Praclice the profound Mr. Do'DWEL has defended

fended in a Book, (whose Title I shall, upon Memory, venture to give the Reader) intitled, A further Prospect of the Case in View;
Proving, that it is our Duty to be present at
sinful Prayers, made sinful by the Mistake of
Fallible Superiors, who have a Right of imposing Prayers. So that, I think, the HighChurches of England may not improperly be
reckon'd Four in Number; which may be
justly distinguished by Things, as well as by
Names of Men, after the following Manner.

I. The Swearing and Forswearing High-

II. The Non-swearing High-Church, that contends for being present at the sinful Prayers of the Church.

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III. The Non-swearing Wine and Water Church.

IV. The Non-swearing No Water Church.



NUMBER LI.

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Wednesday, December 28. 1720.

An Analogy between ancient Heathenism and modern Priestcrast.

S Extremes meet in a Point, and Corruption in Terrestrial Bodies is the next State from Perfection; fo all the Commands and Denunciations of Heaven have not been able to keep the Christian Priesthood, in most Countries, from running Headlong into the Superstitions and Follies of the Gentile Idolaters. By a strange fort of Fatality, they have jump'd in the fame Thoughts, and play'd over and over again, the fame Tricks; infomuch, that if we but make small Allowances for the constant Alterations of Time, and such as must necessarily result from different Languages and Fashions, the present Romish Churches might be eafily mistaken for Heathen Temples, and the

NUMBER

the Services performed in them for Pagan

Worship.

The Devil, as subtle and cunning as he is represented to be, with all the Assistance of corrupt Priests, has not been able to find out a new Device, but has ever danced the Hay, and made his Rounds within the same Circle. The same Arts and Stratagems have been always made use of to seduce and delude Mankind; the same Advantages taken of their Weaknesses and Passions, and in all Times equally applied to destroy true Religion, advance the Priesthood, and make the honest and industrious, but unthinking, Part of the World, the Prey and Property of Hypocrites

and Impostors.

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The All-powerful, All-wife, and All-merciful God himself, is too often represented like the Heathen Deities, to be revengeful, cruel, capricious, impotent, vain, fond of Commendation, and Flattery; and, in effect, fubject to all the other Passions and Imperfections of the weakest Men: His Being, which is boundless as Extension, and which the whole World cannot contain, is pretended to be confined to fingle Structures, and narrow Edifices built with Hands; nay, to Parts of those Edifices; where he is supposed to be pleased and gratified, like frail Mortals, with costly Furniture, gilded Roofs, engraven and polished Marble, fine Carving, and other curious, tho' baubling Workmanship of Mechanicks and Artificers.

I confess I am not wife enough to find our any effential Difference between the present and the old Roman Worship: They both dedicare their Temples to dead Men and Women whom the Papifts call Saints, and the Pagans called Demi-Gods and Goddesses: The latter Forms of Hocus Pocus, which they called Confecrations; and were intended to confure and call down their Deities to inhabit perfonally their Temples, their Images and Idols: The Popish Priests confecrate their Churches for the same Purpose, viz. to obtain the more immediate Presence of the Deity: Like the old Romans too, they erect Altars in their Temples, where they worship Saints with Supplications, Tears, Grimaces, antick and distorted Faces and Gestures, Musick, and Ceremonies, and tender Offerings and Oblations to them; and, like the others, often make Processions, Cavalcades, and Shews in their Honour; and fometimes go in Pilgrimages to them to obtain their Favour.

The Popish Priests have prophaned the plain and simple Direction of our Saviour to his Disciples, for commemorating the Benefits we have received by his Death, by turning it into an old Roman Sacrifice: Amongst them, the Pipers and Harpers were the Forerunners of the Shew; and before the modeth Sacrifice, the Organs strike up a Tune: There the Priests went up to the Altar in a white Garment free from Spots, (being an Emblem of Innocence;) in new Rome the Priest wears

a white Surplice: The Heathen Priest turned about to the East, being the Region of the Rifing Sun, and bowed; the Popish Priest does the fame: The Horns of the Beaft facrificed were marked with Gold, and his Blood received in Golden and Silver Veffels; here the pretended Christian Sacrifice of the real Body and Blood of Christ, is poured into the fame coftly Cups, or laid upon as rich Plates and Dishes: The old Roman Altar was raised. by feveral Steps, above the Floor of their Temples; fo is the present. The Priest, amongst them, made a crooked Line with his Knife from the Head to the Tail of the Victim; the Popish Priest plays Tricks of Legerdermain with his Fingers over the Elements: Laftly, When the Beaft was confecrated and killed, the Heathen Priests regaled themselves upon what was left, after their Gods were ferved; the Romish Priests make it prophane for any Layman to drink of the confecrated Wine, or for any one even to eat the Bread but the Communicants.

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The old Romans had different Orders of Priests, with different and distinct Offices and Revenues, viz. the High Priest, the Luperci, the Augurs, the Haruspices, the Pontifices, the Flamines, Salii, Feciales, Sodales, the Duumviri, Decemviri, Quindecemviri, the Keepers of the Sybilline Books, the Corybantes, &c. The present Romans (besides the several Sorts which are in Use and Fashion amongst us) have a Pope, Cardinals, Dominicans,

nicans, Franciscans, Jesuits, Carmelites, Benedictines, Mendicants, Capuchins, Cistertians, Observantines, Augustines, Servites, &c. In imitation also of the Vestal Virgins, in old Rome, they have founded several Orders of Nuns, who take a Vow of Chastity, for the Breach of which they are immured, as the others were burned alive: And as they had a Right to deliver from the Hands of Justice, any Malesactors they casually met in their Walks; so the present Romish Priests claim and exercise an equal Right to protect all Criminals who can sty to them for Protection, which is borrowed from that of the old Roman Asyla.

nefastos, their Fasts and Feasts, their Sucrificia, their Epulas, their Ferias, in Honour of their Gods and Demi-Gods; the present Romans also make distinctions of Days a great part of their Religion; they too have their Dies fastos in Honour of their Saints, or to commemorate and condole past Missortunes, or rejoice over signal Successes; and some of their Feasts, and particularly their Carnivals, exceed in Lewdness and Prodigality the

Bacchanalia of the Ancients.

The Heathens had their Deos Tutelares, to whom the Defence of certain Countries were committed; and their Deos Presides, who had the Safe-guard of particular Cities; the Papists have Saints, who supply the same Offices:

Offices: Artificers and Professions have also their particular Saints who preside over them; Scholars have their Saint Nicholas, and Saint Gregory; Painters, Saint Luke; as Soldiers and Lovers had formerly their Mars, and Venus: Diseases too have their Saints to cure them; as the Pox, Saint Roque; the falling Evil, Saint Cornelius; the Tooth-Ach, Saint Apollin: And even Beasts and Cattle have their's; Saint Loy is the Horseleech, and

Saint Anthony the Swineherd.

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As the Heathen Priests would suffer none to come into their Sanctuaries but themselves; neither will the Popish Priests permit any Layman to come within the Rails of the Altar, and profane with unhallowed Feet that Holy Place. As the Ancients obliged all who were initiated into their Mysteries to confess, under the most severe Denunciations, all the Secrets of their past Lives, by which Means they were fo much in their Power, that they never afterwards durst blab our what they faw, nor give the least Opposition to their Designs; so the Romish Priests trust their Mysteries only to the vere Adepti, and have made the same use of Confession, (the loss of which is forely lamented by others;) for they oblige, upon the Penalty of Damnation, all their Votaries to confess not only their private Sins, but tecret Thoughts, as well as every Thing elfe they know of other Peoples, which may any way regard the Interests of their Order; and Ee

and so have Possession and fast hold of all Families, and become acquainted with all the Designs, which may ever thwart their Pride; and consequently have secured their own Domination, and the Peoples Misery, beyond

almost a possibility of Redress.

Lastly, as the Heathen Priests sacrificed Goars to Bacchus, for browling his Vines; and Men to Pluto and Proferpina, and other angry Deities, to appeale their Wrath, and avert Evils from themselves; so the Popish Priests facrifice and devote their Enemies. under the Names of Hereticks and Schifmaticks, to the infernal Fiend: And as those Idolaters were allowed to know when was the most proper Time to make their Sacrifices to their Deities, and what Victims would be most acceptable to them, as being prefumed to understand best the Minds of their provoked Gods; fo the present Ones are in Possession of the sole Judgment of what is Herefy, and of facrificing by that Means whom they please to their Ambition and Revenge; which equally subjects the unhappy Lairy to them.

They have also imitated the Heathens in making every human Foible and Imbecility, as well as every common and uncommon Appearance in Nature, contribute to their Interests; which shall be the Subject of my next

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Paper.

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Saturday, December 31. 1720.

Priestly Empire founded on the Weaknesses of Human Nature.

HERE is not a living Creature in the Universe, which has not some innate Weakness, or original Imbecility co-eval to its Being; that is,

fome Inclinations or Disgusts, some peculiar Desires or Fears, which render it an easy Prey to other Animals, who, from their constitutional Sagacity or Experience, know how to take Advantage of this Instruity; of which it would be needless, as well as endless, to enumerate Particulars; my Purpose being only to shew, that all the Dignity of human Nature, and the Superiority which Almighty E e 2 God

God has given to Man above other Beings, has not exempted him from this Imperfection; which probably was left in his Fabrick, to put him in mind of his Mortality, humble his Pride, and excite his

Diligence.

The peculiar Foible of Mankind, is Superstition, or an intrinsick and pannick Fear of invisible and unknown Beings. It is obvious to every one, that there must be Causes in Nature for all the Good or Evil which does, or ever can happen to us; and it is impossible for any Man so far to divest himself of all Concern for his own Happiness, as not to be follicitous to know what those Causes are; and fince, for the most part, they are fo hidden and out of fight, that we cannot perceive or discover them by our own Endeayours, we conclude them to be immaterial, and in their own Nature invisible; and are, for the most part, ready to take their Accounts, who have the Dexterity to make us believe that they know more of the Matter than we do, and that they will not deceive us.

To this Ignorance and Credulity joined together, we are beholden for the most grievous Frauds and Impositions, which ever did, or do yet oppress Mankind, and interrupt their Happiness, viz. for the Revelations and Visions of Enthusiasts, for all the forged Religions in the World, and the A-

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buses and Corruptions of the true One; as well as all the idle and fantastical Stories of Conjurers and Witches, of Spirits, Apparitions, Fairies, Dæmons and Hobgoblins, Fortune-Tellers, Astrologers, and the Belief in Dreams, Portents, Omens, Prognosticks, and the several Sorts of Divinations, which, more or less, disturb the greatest Part of the World, and have made them the Dupes and Property of Knaves and Impostors in all Ages.

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Every thing in the Universe is in constant

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Motion, and where ever we move we are furrounded with Bodies, every one of which
must, in a certain Degree, operate upon themselves and us; and it cannot be otherwise,
that in the Variety of Actions and Events,
which happen in all Nature, but some must
appear very extraordinary to those who
know not their true Causes. Men naturally
admire what they cannot apprehend, and
seem to do some sort of Credit to their Understandings, in believing whatever is out of
their Reach, to be Supernatural.

From hence perpetual Advantages have been given to, and Occasions taken by, the Heathen and Popish Priests, to circumvent and oppress the credulous and unwary Vulgar; what fraudulent Uses have been made of Eclipses, Meteors, epidemical Plagues, Inundations, great Thunder and Lightnings, and other amazing Prodigies, and seeming

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Menaces of Nature? What jugling Tricks have been or may be acted with Glasses, speaking Trumpets, Ventriloquies, Ecchoes, Phosphorus, magick Lanthorns, &c. in the ignorant Parts of the World? The Americans were made to believe, that Paper and Letters were Spirits, which conveyed Mens Thoughts from one to another; and a dancing Mare was, not many Years since, burnt for a Witch in the Inquisition

in Portugal.

Nature works by a Thousand Ways imperceptible to us: The Loadstone draws Iron to it, Gold Quickfilver; the sensitive Plant shrinks from the Touch; some forts of Vegetables attract one another and twine together; others grow farther apart; the treading upon the Torpedo affects, and gives raging Pains to our whole Bodies; Turkey-Cocks and Pheafants fly at a red Rag; a Rattle Snake, by a fort of magical Power in his Eyes (as it is faid) will force a Squirrel to run into his Mouth; Musick will cure the Bite of a Tarantula; the Frights and Longings of Women with Child, will stamp Impressions upon the Babes within them; People, in their Sleep, will walk fecurely over Precipices, and the Ridges of Houses, where they durst not venture, when awake; Lightning will melt a Sword without hurting the Scabbard.

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There is something within us, which we all feel, that baffles and gets the better of our best Reasonings and Philosophy; and this thews it felf in Love, in Fear, in Hatred, Ambition, and almost every Act of the Mind; but in nothing so much as in Superstition: Sometimes we find a fecret Pannick, and at other times a strange and uncommon Energy, or Feeling of a mighty Power within us; and not being able to account, by any Conduct of Reason, or other Causes in Nature, for fuch Perceptions, are eafily perswaded to believe them to be Supernatural: And from hence great Philosophers, Poets, Legislators, famous Conquerors, and often Madmen, have been thought in many Ages, by themselves as well as others, to be inspired; and even Distempers, such as, Apoplexies, Epilepsies, Prophetick Fits and Trances have been deemed miraculous. Cool Mr. Oct Boot . 1.) and

Nothing strikes so strongly upon our Senses, as what causes Surprize and Admiration: There are very sew Men, who are not affected with unusual Sounds and Voices, the Groans of others in Misery, the Solemnity of a Coronation, or any publick Shew, the Pomp of a Funeral, the Farce of a Procession, the Power of Eloquence, the Charms of Poetry, the rich and splendid Equipage of great Men, or the solemn Phiz and Mien of an Enthusiast. Whoever therefore can find out the Secret of hitting luckily upon this E e 4

Foible and native Imbecility in Mankind, may govern them and lead them as he pleafes. And herein has confilted the greatest Skill and Success of crafty Priests in all Ages: They have made use of this Power to turn us and wind us to all their Purposes, and have built and founded most of their Superstitions upon it; and consequently, have ever adapted their Worship rather to catch our Passions, than convince our Minds, and enlighten our Understandings; all which is directly contrary to the Spirit of Christianity and the Precepts of our Saviour, as shall be fully shewn in the next Paper.

For this Reason the Heathens built their Temples in Groves, in solitary, dark and defart Recesses, by or over Caverns, Grottoes, or in the midst of ecohoing and resounding Rocks, that the hideous and dismal Aspect, and often hollow and hoarse bellowing of such Places, might strike a solemn Awe and religious Horror into their Votaries, and sometimes help their Imaginations to hear Voices, and see Forms, and so intimidate and prepare them for any Stories and Impressions, which they should think it their Interest to make.

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The Popish Priests have admirably well aped these their Predecessors; by building their Churches dark and dismal, with figured and painted Windows, to let in a false and glim-

glimmering Light; arched and contrived in fuch manner, as to resound the Voice hollow and shrill; with many private Apartments. Cometaries for their Saints, proud Inscriptions, whispering Places, secret Chappels for Confessions, saying Masses, Dirges, Penances, &c. Like the Heathens too, they build their Temples folemn and magnificent, in antick and uncommon Figures, adorn them with Silver and Gold, rich Carpets, curious Statues, and Images fluck about with Jewels; and their Priests appear in gaudy Vestments, and fantastical Robes and Caps, and perform their Worship with Musick and affected Ceremonies; all which Pageanrry and Farce is calculated, and intended to act upon the Passions, attract the Eyes, amuse, lull and fufpend the Understanding, and draw Admiration and Reverence to those who preside in these haughty Fabricks, and this pompous Adoration: Their Bells too, which call the People together, are contrived to emit fuch Sounds, as affect the Minds of most People, with a fort of superstitious Melancholly.

Indeed, as the Romish Priests are more numerous, have vastly larger Revenues, and more Leisure, so they have greatly improved upon the Heathens in this Art of deceiving insomuch, that there is scarce an Imperfection or Error of human Nature, which is not adopted into their Scheme, and made sub-

fervient

fervient to their Interest. Men of sprightly Genius and Courage are caught by their Ambition, are highly honoured, flattered, and raised up by their general Voice to the highest Dignities, and then are indulged in all their Passions, and gratified with Confessors, who are not only to overlook or pardon, but affift them in their vicious Pleasures; by which Arts those great Talents, instead of being nobly employ'd to free Mankind from facerdotal Usurpations, are meanly perverted to support and aggrandize the monkish Em-

pire.

Men of violent and impetuous Tempers, are fuitably employ'd to execute their Tyrannical Defigns, and to take Vengeance of their Enemies; and the Debauched and Wicked are made to buy their Peace of Heaven, by giving Money and Lands to the Priests; but none contribute so much to advance their System, as Visionaries and Enthusiasts: There are, in all Countries, Multitudes of People, whom Ignorance, Pride, Conceit, ill Habit of Body, melancholly and splenatick Tempers, unfortunate Circumstances, causeless and secret Fears, and a pannick Disposition of Mind, have prepared to be the Objects, as well as Instruments of Delusion, and they have been ever made use of accordingly.

Some of these are thrust or decoyed into religious Houses, or perswaded to lead

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retired, recluse and austere Lives, and to torture and punish themselves with Whippings, Penances, Fasting, and to walk Barefoot, to astonish the gaping Multitude, and thereby gain Reverence to the Priesthood, for their fancied Holiness; whilst the governing Ecclesiasticks feast and riot in delicious Banquets, ride in State with Coaches and Six, attended by numerous Servants in costly Liveries; and Earth and Sea is ransacked, and Heaven it self profaned, to maintain their Luxury and Pride.

Such amongst them as are disposed to hear Voices and see Forms, shall hear and see enough of those, which are real ones, and afterwards be made use of to divulge them; and in order to it, their Sanctity shall be proclaimed abroad, and their mad and incoherent Speeches be called Revelations, heavenly Dispensations, and incomprehensible Mysteries. Such crazed and fanatical Men and Women have been the Founders of most of the Colleges, Monasteries, and Nunneries of the Romish Church, (to say nothing of o-

thers) and their Follies and Madness been the Support of the Papal Dominion.

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But this artificial Devotion, this mechanick Religion has nothing to do with Christianity; which is natural Religion restored and improved, and consists in Virtue and Morality, and in being useful and beneficent to one another, as I shall shew in my next Paper,

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The Prophets have taught us the fame Lesson: The First Chapter of Isaiah fully shews, that Religion does not consist in Saerifices, in Burnt-offerings of Rams, and the Fat of fed Beafts, in the Blood of Bullocks, and of Lambs, and of He-Goats, in vain Oblations, Incense, New Moons, Sabbaths, and Calling of Assemblies, in appointed Feasts, or many Prayers; but in doing Good to Mankind. The Propher fums up our Duty in these Words, Cease to do evil, learn to do well, feek Judgment, relieve the Oppressed, judge the Fatherlefs, plead for the Widow; for, as another Prophet fays, What doth the Lord require of thee, O Man, but to do justly, and to love Mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God? Micah, chap. vi. v. 8. For roolamous abroad, an Wheir mad and Inco-



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Wednesday, January 4- 1720. enous

our Bodyest-with any thing that regulates

In what only true Religion confifts.

Have undertaken in this Paper to prove, what, methinks, should want no Proof; namely, that the All-powerful God is not a whimfical and humorous Being, that governs his

Creatures by Caprice, and loads them with arbitrary and useless Burthens, which can

serve no good Purpose in Nature.

The Almighty is infinitely happy in his own Perfections, and cannnot receive Pleafure from such Things or Actions, as only the weakest Men are fond of, and the wisest contemn. He is not capable, like Mortals, of being ruffled by Accidents, or surprized by Disappointments. Wisdom, Goodness and Felicity, are essential to his Being; and confequently,

fequently, he could have no View in creating Mankind, but their own Happiness; for we can neither add to his, nor take a-

way from it.

It is abfurd therefore to suppose, that there can be any Merit in bare Opinions and abstruse Speculations; or in the Performance of indifferent and useless Actions; or, indeed, that any thing can be Part of true Religion, but what has a tendency to make Men virtuous and happy. The Father of Mercies will never perplex our Minds, or burthen our Bodies, with any thing that signifies

nothing.

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Moses indeed gave to the Fews a carnal Law, a Law of Bondage; a Toke, which neither they, nor their Posterity could bear; Statutes which were not good, and Judgments by which they could not live. But these were given them for the Hardness of their Hearts, and as Punishments for their manifold Sins and Iniquities. And besides, they were only to last for a Time, and afterwards give way to a simple, pure, and perfect Law, to a spiritual, innocent, and undefiled Religion; free from their own fond Superstitions, and the stale Idolatries of the Gentiles; not loaded either with Priests, Sacrifices, or Ceremonies; a Religion, which was to confift in Spirit and in Truth, and intended to make Men wiser and better.

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It feems plains to me, that there is but one Article of Faith in all this Religion, and that Essential to the very Being of it; namely, that fesus is the Messiah: Without this preliminary Acknowledgment, his Mission could not have been owned, nor his Precepts obeyed; which are nothing else but Exhortations to Love, and Directions for social Happiness; and which he has enforced, by annexing eternal Rewards to the Observance of them. Hitherto Virtue had expected its Reward in this Life; but our Saviour gave new Sanctions to it, by bringing Life and Immortality to Light.

There is no Proposition in all Scripture more evidently reveal'd, or laid down in more positive and express Terms, than that the Confession of this Truth, was the Basis and Support of Christianity, the unum magnum requisite to be believed: Every thing else is practical Duty, and Belief is no farther concern'd in it, than as it produces Practice. For before we can think our selves obliged by a Precept, we must be satisfied of its Reasonableness, or of the Legislator's

Authority.

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The World had been so long corrupted by Superstition, and deluded and abused by selfish and lying Priests, who taught Wickedness for Virtue, and Nonsense for Philosophy, and placed Devotion in soolish Ceremonies and Sacrifices, and in ridiculous

Cringes,

Cringes, antick Vestments and Grimaces, that nothing less than a Divine Legislator, with the Power of Miracles, could restore Men to their Senses and to Natural Religion. The sole Article therefore that our Saviour made necessary to be believed was, That he came from God, and acted by the Authority of God. Then every one would see the Impossibility that he could deceive or mislead Men, and consequently would take his Word for every thing else, in the Sense he understood it.

And this Proceeding was agreeable to eternal Reason; namely, to make nothing neceffary in Belief, which was not necessary to Practice; for what Purpose could be served in obliging Men to believe, or rather to fay they believed, mysterious and unintelligible Propositions? Such Articles are only the Watch-words of a Party, and can never be the Objects of real Affent; for no Man can be faid to believe what he does not underfland, and has not fuirable Ideas of, as far as his Belief goes. We must understand the Meaning of every Term in a Proposition, before we can affent to it or dissent from it; for Words, of which we do not understand the Signification, are the fame to us as if they had no Signification at all. How much therefore more honest and prudent would it be to own, at first, our Ignorance concerning certain abstruse Speculations, than to Cringes form

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form Propositions about them, pretend to define and explain them, and then confess that we do not understand our own Definitions and Explanations; and call out Heresy and Atheism, when we are desired to speak

intelligibly, and tell what we mean?

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But to the Proofs from Scripture: John iii. 8. fays, He that believeth in him is not condemned; but he that believeth not, is condemned already. And v. 36. He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting Life; and he that believeth not on the Son, shall not see Life. And chap. vi. 40. Every one who feeth the Son, and believeth on him, may live eternally. And v. 51. I am the living Bread which came down from Heaven; if any Man eat of this, be shall live for ever. And Acts x. 43. To him all the Prophets bear Witness, that through his Name, whoever shall believe in him, shall receive Remission of Sins. And chap. xvi. v. 31. And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy House. And Rom. chap x. v. 9. If thou shalt confess with thy Mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine Heart, that God hath raised him from the Dead, thou shalt be saved. If Epistle of John, chap. iv. v. 2, 3, and 15. and chap. v. ver. 1. to the same purpose.

These, with many more plain and direct Texts, make only this Article necessary to be believed, and supersede all others. Nor is this required of us, barely because it is F f

true, or to gain adventitious Honour to the Deity, who wants not the Applause of poor mortal Men; for fuch Belief could fignify nothing: But it was required of us to obtain Obedience to his Commands, and direct our Practice, to promote virtuous Actions, and the Principles which produce them. John, chap. v. ver. 24. Verily, verily, I fay unto you, He that heareth my Word, and believeth on him that fent me, bath everlasting Life. And chap viii. v. 31. Jesus faid to these Jews which believed in him, if ye continue in my Word, then are ye my Disciples indeed. So that Faith in Christ is not enough, unless we obey his Word; or rather, we cannot be cruly faid to believe in him, whilst we reject his Commandments. Ift Epiftle General of St. John, chap. ii. v. 3, 4. And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his Commandments: He that faith, I know him, and keepeth not his Commandments, is a Lyar, and the Truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his Word, in him verily is the Love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.

Let us therefore see what are those Commands, in the Observance of which Christianity consists. It does not consist in the Observance of Days, nor Months, nor Time, nor Tears, Gal. iv. and 9. And Rom. xiv. v. 5. One Man esteemeth one Day above another, another Man esteemeth every Day alike: Let every Man he falls are finded in his same Mind.

Man be fully perfuaded in his own Mind.

It does not consist in positive Institutions, in Forms and Ceremonies. I Cor. chap. vii. v. 19. Circumcision is nothing, and Uncircumcision is nothing, but keeping the Commandments of Christ. And Gal. vi. v. 15. In Christ fessus, neither Circumcision availeth any Thing, nor Uncircumcision, but a new Creature. Gal. v.

ver. 6. to the same Purpose.

It does not consist in Meats nor Drinks, in Fish nor in Flesh. I Cor. chap. viii. v. 8. Meat commendeth us not to God; for neither if we eat, are we the better; nor if we eat not, are we the worse. But take heed lest this Liberty of yours become a Stumbling-Block to them that are weak. And Rom. xiv. v. 17. The Kingdom of God is not Meat nor Drink; but Righteousness, and Peace, and Joy in the

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Prayers. Mat. vi. v.7. When ye pray, use not vain Repetitions, as the Heathens do; for they thinkthey shall be heard for their much speaking. Be ye not therefore like them; for the Father knoweth what Thing ye have need of before ye ask. Indeed, it seems plain to me from this Text, as well as from the Reason of the Thing, that Prayer itself becomes chiefly a Duty, as it raises our Minds, by a Contemplation of the Divine Wisdom, Power and Goodness, to an Acknowledgment of his repeated Bounties to Mankind; and as it disposes us to an Imitation of those high Perfections,

and to be merciful and beneficent to one another. For it is abfurd to suppose, that we can direct the All-wise Being in the Dispensations of his Providence; or can slatter or persuade him out of his eternal Decrees. If therefore any Texts in Scripture seem to carry a contrary Implication, I conceive they ought to be understood with the same Allowances as those are, which speak of God's Hands and Feet, and of his

being subject to human Passions.

It does not consist in Sacrifices performed in pompous Churches and magnificent Buildings, or in consecrated Trinkets. Acts xvii. v. 24, 25. God, that made the World, and all Things therein, seeing that he is Lord of Heaven and Earth, dwelleth not in Temples made with Hands, neither is worshipped with Mens Hands, as though he wanted any thing, seeing he giveth to all Life and Breath, and every Thing. Acts vii. v. 48,49,50. The most High dwelleth not in Temples made with Hands. Heaven is his Throne, and Earth is his Footstool; what House will ye build to me, saith the Lord; or where is the Place of my Rest? Hath not my Hand made all Things?

His Being is univerfal, not confin'd to Churches, Chappels, Choirs, nor Altars; but his Presence is every where alike, and not more immediately in one Place than another. Acts xvii. v. 27, 28, 29. He is not far from every one of us, for in him we

live

The Independent Whig. 437.

live and move, and have our Being, as certain also of your own Poets, have said, for we are his Offspring; for as much therefore as we are the Offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto Gold or Silver, or Stone graven by Art or

Man's Device.

The Almighty has no favourite Opinions, Sects and Nations. Acts x. v. 34, 35. And Peter opened his Mouth and said, Of a Truth, I perceive that God is no Respecter of Persons; but in every Nation he that feareth him and worketh Righteousness, is accepted of him. Rom ii. v. 11. There is no Respect of Persons with God. Colos. iii. v. 11. There is neither Greek, nor Jew, Circumcision, nor Uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, Bond nor Free, but Christ is all, and in all. Gal. iii. v. 28. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither Bond nor Free, there is neither Male nor Female, for ye are all one in Jesus Christ.

How therefore shall we worship him? how know his Will? St. John tells us, chap. vii, v. 16, 17. If any Man will do God's Will, he will know of the Dostrine, whether it he of God or not: That is as much as to say, "Make use of the Judgment which God has given you; and see whether the Dostrine taught you, be worthy of an Omnipotent Author; see whether it teaches Peace and Love to your Neighbour, Compassion to

" all in Diffress, Forbearance of Injuries, " Humanity and indulgence to all who dif-" fer from you, Duty to Parents, Submif-" fion and Obedience to the Laws of your Country, and Charitableness and Benevolence to all Mankind, and even to the Brute Creation; then you may be fure fuch Doctrine comes from God. But if it breathes forth Revenge, and implacable " Hatred; if it raises Mobs, Civil Wars, " and Perfecutions, for trifling Opinions; if it has for it's End Ambition and worldly " Pride, and overturns every thing Sacred " and Civil, which stands in its Way; if it encourages the worst Men, and oppresses the best; if it discourages Industry, and " depopulates Nations; then there are plain Traces of Satan's, or the Popilo Priest's Foot in it, and fuch a Religion can never

come from God,

When you have made this your best Use of the Faculties God has given you, your Endeavours will certainly be accepted by him; and you will meet all the Reward which attends the judging right, since you have done all in your Power to do so: For God puts upon no Man the Agyptian Task of making Bricks without Straw; nor requires any thing which you cannot perform. Rom. chap. ii. v. 10, 11. Glory, Honour, and Peace, to every Man who worketh Good; to the Jew surface, and then to the Gentile; for

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as many as have sinned without Law, shall be punished without Law: and those that have sinned in the Law, shall perish by the Law. And, v, 14. 15. For when the Gentiles, which have not the Law, do by Nature the Things of the Law, they are a Law unto themselves: Which sheweth the Work of the Law written in their Hearts; their Conscience also bearing them Witness; and their Thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another.

So that the Gentiles themselves are to be judged by their Sincerity, and not condemned for involuntary Errors. Rom. xiv. v. 10, 11, 12, 13. Why dost thou judge thy Brother? As I live, saith the Lord, every Knee shall bow to me, and every Tongue shall confess to God; so then every one of us shall give an Account to God. Let us not, therefore, judge one another any more. And, v. 22. we are told who will be judged to Happiness; Happy is he who condemneth not himself in that Thing which he alloweth. I Epistle General of St. John chap. iii. v. 21. Beloved, if our Hearts condemn us not, then have we Considence towards God.

Cornelius, tho' a Heathen, is commended in Acts the xth, v. 2. as a devout Man, and one that feared God with all his House, which gave much Alms to the People, and prayed to God always: And Lydia, a Seller of Purple, tho' neither a Jew nor a Christian, is said to

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be a Worshiper of God, and one whose Heart God had open'd, before the heard the Preach-

ing of Paul, Acts xvi. v. 14.

This comprehensive Charity, this Spirit of publick Beneficence, runs every where through the New Testament; nor can I find any Precept there given, but what is manifeftly advantageous to Mankind, conducing to their present Happiness, and deducible from eternal Reason, and the Result of it. Mat. xxii. v. 35, to 39. A Lawyer ask'd of our Saviour, which is the great Commandment of the Law? And Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, and with all thy Soul, and with all thy Mind. This is the first and great Commandment: And the second is like unto it; Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thy self: Upon these Two Commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.

Another Lawyer asks of him, (Luke x. 25.) What shall I do to obtain eternal Life? and he said unto him, What is written in the Law? how readest thou? And he said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Soul, and all thy Strength, and all thy Mind, and thy Neighbour as thy self. And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: Do this and thou Shalt live. And chap. xviii. v. 18, and 20, &c. A certain Ruler ask'd him, Saying, Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal Life? And Jesus said, Thou knowest the Com-

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mandments: Do not commit Adultery, do not kill, do not steal, do not bear false Witness; honour thy Father and thy Mother. He indeed adds afterwards another Condition, which was to sell all he had and give it to the Poor; which the Ruler could not bring himself to comply with: tho' I dare say he would have promised to have believed Creeds by the Dozen, if those would have done him any service. But I cannot find, that in all Scripture, our Saviour does impose upon us the Belief of one Modern Creed, or of any other but that He was the Messiah.

Chap. xviii. v. 8. Zaccheus, a Publican, faith unto the Lord, half of my Goods I give unto the Poor; and if I have taken any thing from any Man by false Accusation, I restore him four fold: And Jesus said unto him, this Day is Salvation come unto thy House; without asking him one Question about his Faith.

Rom. xiii. v. 8, 9. Owe no Man any thing but to love one another; for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the Law: For this, Thou shalt not commit Adultery, thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not bear false Witness, thou shalt not covet; and if there is any other Commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this Saying, namely, thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thy self. The same Doctrine, in another Place, is thus shortly described; By this all Men shall know that ye are my Disciples, if ye love one another. So that the

Love of God, and of our Neighbour, is the Whole Dury of a Christian. The first implies the Worship of God, or rather is the true and very Worship of God in Spirit and in Truth; and the latter comprehends all the Moral and focial Virtues. Ift Epiftle of John, chap. iv. v. 7, 8. Beloved, let us love one another, for Love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God; he that loveth not, knoweth not God, for God is Love. v. 16. God is love; and he that dwelleth in Love, dwelleth in God, and God in him. And, chap. v. ver. 3. St. John defines what the Love of God is; namely, for this is the Love of God, that we keep his Commandments.

This appear still more evident, when we examine, for what Virtues and Crimes Men will be rewarded, and punished, eternally. Matth. Chap. xxv. v. 31. When the Son of Man shall come in his Glory, and all the bely Angels with him, then shall be fit upon the Throne of his Glory, and before him shall be gather'd all Nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as the Shepherd divideth the Sheep from the Goats; and he shall set the Sheep on the Right Hand, and the Goats on the Left. Then shall the King fay to them on the Right Hand, Come, ye Bleffed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the Foundation of the World: for I was bungry, and ye gave me Meat :

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Meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me Drink; I was a Stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; in Prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall be say also to them on the Left Hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting Fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels; for I was hungred, and ye gave me no Meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no Drink; I was a Stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick and in Prise

son, and ye visited me not.

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But the Want of Faith is here objected to no Man: No one is rewarded, or punished, for believing, or not believing, in Transubstantiation, Consubstantiation, or the Real Presence; in Predestination or Free-will; or for having, or not having, right or wrong Conceptions of the Trinity in Unity, the Incarnation, Hypostatick Union, infinite Sarisfaction, &c. Nor is the Divine Right of Bishops, Presbyters, and Tithes, once mention'd. Not a Word about Obedience to Spiritual Sovereigns, and Ecclesiastical Princes, or about our receiving the Sacraments from a regular Priest, descended in a right Line from the Apostles.

Such a Religion as this, which I have deferibed, is agreeable to the Divine Justice; which does not punish any Man for speculative Opinions, and especially for Opinions which neither do Good nor Hurt to

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any one, and for Opinions which no one can help. " This is a Religion every way worthy of its eternal Author; and we " may know by the Doctrine, that it comes " from God. It is a Religion for Men of Sense, for Philosophers, for honest Men; " and comprehensible too by the meanest "Vulgar, without a Guide; a Religion of Reason, free from the blind Mazes and " studied Intricacies of Popish Priests, and beneficial to Society at first View. " despises apish Gestures, and external Buf-" foonery; and effectually prevents, and puts an End to, all inhumane Fierceness, and holy Squabbles, ever occasioned by " the felfish Religions of corrupt Priests. " It leaves not unhappy Men in perpe-" tual Doubts and Anxieties, nor toffes and " tumbles them, for Relief, out of one Su-" perstition into another; but esteems them " all alike.

In fhort, this is a Religion, which eve-" ry wife and honest Man would wish to be

Religion; a Religion of Charity, the Retigion of Jesus; and this is The INDE-

" PENDENT WHIG'S Religion.

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31 \$10

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63 the all

Arch

the

Sevi



THE

INDEX:

A.

Aron, (a High Priest) cheats the Israelites

A of their Earings, 97. Encourages them to

Idolatry, ibid.

Abraham, the Covenant with him, its Clearness, 61

Advice, why feldom taken, 2.

d

e

E

Almighty God, not to be judg'd of as Men are,

Altar-Pieces, a Description of them, 248
Apollos, a Primitive Preacher in the Acts, never or-

dained,

Apostate Clergy, to reclaim them to the Church the Business of this Paper,

Apostles, the Eleven, lost no Credit by Judas hanging himself, 15. Their Dostrines proved by Miracles, 31. Their Disinterestedness, ib. The Qualifications required to succeed them, 54. An Analogy between them and modern Divines, 55, 56. The Impossibility of succeeding them, 56. Their Conduct, 63. How they executed their Commission to preach the Gospel, 392, 393. They gave the Holy Ghost to all that believed,

Archbishops and Bishops derive their Characters from the Crown, 96. Archbishop of Canterbury, his severe Character of High-Church Priests, 103 Aristotle,

Aristotle, a strange Observation concerning him, 195 Articles Ecclefiastic, feldom subscribed in their bonest and original Meaning, 125, & feq. Afs, the gravest of all Beafts, 116 Atheism, never can be introduc'd among the People, 222. Nor overthrow Religion, 324. and gainful Reasons of the Outcry of the Priests about it, ib. and 325. They promote Practical Atheifm under Colour of combating Speculative Atheifm, ib. The Villanies committed by Priests, as bad as those committed by Atheifts, 325 to 327. priestly Atheism of false swearing, 329, 330. The profane Jests they make about the sacred Ties of an Oath, ib. Their by and execuable manner of promoting this fort of Atheifm, ib. and 331. Being Atheists they are jet good Churchmen, ib. How much worse they are than all other Atbeists, 332. How much their Atheism is aggravated by a lying Pretence to Religion, 333. Atheism, which produces no ill Action, is better than a Religion that does, ib. The Enmity to Toleration of Religion and Conscience, prov'd to be Atheifm, and the High Priefts to be guilty of this Atheism, by many Arguments and Infrances, 334 to 341. High Church Priefts guilty of Atheifm, by Subverting all Morality. Proofs of this, and Instances, 344 to 352. High Priests the greatest Atheists, 358 to 360 Atheilts, in what Sense preferable to wicked Priefts, 19. Speculative Atheifts owe their Rife to Prieftcraft, or 1 353 to 357

Authority (human) in Religion, its Absurdity, 138. No where appointed by God, 137. A Character of it, 212, 213. Wherein it confifts, 214. Disclaimed and probibited by our Saviour, 385 Proofs of this, ib. and 386 to 388. But the Opinion and Practices of High Church Men, dif-1 Jerentation of Canceltation 188, 1389 A Jevele Character of High-Church Priefis,

Ariflories

E

. 19

di

16

.71

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Car

YEST 9

Cel

Cen Cer

RG dan

of Bosony, 232. Ass permission to Religion, 239.

Belief, by what supported, 5166 Guides, 1416 Bible, best understood without Selfish Guides, 141. The Use and Excellency of it, 286, & seq. Dreadded, suppress'd, and calumniated by most Priests, 287. 288. It ought to be read, without Regard to the Opinions and Interpretations of weak and fallible Men, 289. The Reason of this, 290. By what Acts and Prejudices the reading of it is render'd useless, 291: The Encouragements given for understanding it wrong, 292. Mr. Chillingworth's Observations hereupon, ib. and 293 Bishops, made by Letters Patents without any Elec-- sion, 93. Formerly in Scotland, durante bene Placito, ib. Exercise Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction by Commission from the Crown, 99. Bishops and Clergy created by Act of Parliament, 102. How apt to differ, 108. Their divine Right independent of the Pope, the peculiar Whimfey of our perjur'd High Church Men, 112. Whether 'tis agreeable to their Ecclefiastical Dignity to bless their own Table, 147 Bowing to the East, bow to be regarded, 276 enies but one Article of Faith, 221. Nothing ne-

ŝ

D

U

11

e

2,

10-

of

he

50

ts,

8.

ter

14.

the

dif-

89

B.

C

CALL of the Holy Ghost, how little believ'd by those that make most Noise about it, 71. A plain Proof of this, ib. Was quite another thing formerly, ib. What is meant by it now, ib. and 72 Cæsar, changes the Commonwealth into a Tyranny, without changing the Names of the Magistrates, 82 Canon, (the Second) Excommunicates all who call in question the King's Authority in Spirituals, 99 Celibacy, how abus'd and perverted by Priestcraft, 163 Censure Ecclesiastic, deriv'd from the Law, 99 Ceremonics, (Popish) opposite to the Genius of the Gospel, 231. They are the Effects and Concomitants

of Bigotry, 232. Are pernicious to Religion, 233. The mischievous Effetts of them, ib. and 234. The ridiculous Reasons brought to support them, expos'd, 234 to 237. The Priestly Policy of them, 238 and 243. The Pagun Religion confifted altogether in Ceremonies ; the Use their Priests made of them, 240. And how they abused the People by them, ib. and 242. The Ceremonies of the Mass expos'd, storingrans on aneal and labible 244 and 245. Chaplains, an Enquiry into their Original, 144. They are expensive Domesticks, 143. Their Jorry Employment formerly, 145. But much mended now, 147. Instances of this, ib. and 148. Their Facetiousness and Sawciness, ib. They buly themfelves with all Matters, 149. Divide Families into Factions, ib. They are excellent Bowlers, zealous Topers, and eminent Whisk-players, ib. Their Pride and Primmels, 150. Are Spies upon the Wealthy, and dangerous in Families, ib. Instances of the Mischiefs they do, 150, 151. The good ones water of the bid. Charity, bow abus'd by High Priefts, 166. How apt to be misapplied, 202, 203 Christian Religion, a Character of it, 430. It contains but one Article of Faith, 431. Nothing necessary in it but what produces Practice, 432. Commands ns to believe nothing but what we can comprehend, ib. Proofs of all this, 433 to 435. In what it does confist, 436, 437. And in what it does not confist, 437 to 441 Christianity, the Plainness of it, 51, 52 Christians, all alike empowered to exercise all the Functions of their Religion, 52. How distinguished from Reprobates and High Priests, 177. Their Unanimity and Benevolence towards each other, till their Priests enflamed and divided them, 314. The wicked Means and Arts by which they did fo, ib. The common Right they all have to pleach Christ, Church 394, 398

(

20

36

91

.6

.01

100

283

SHELF

2/15

1999

61 1

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968

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989

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181 6

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41

52

the

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till

The

ib.

ist.

rch

Church of England, what its great Characteriftic, ot Church, the best constituted one, a fure Mark of it, 149. The Three High Churches in England, an Account of them, 404 to 411. Church, by Law establish'd, what it is, 405 Circumcifion, (a Jewish Sacrament) not celebrated of lick Petition, 92. I hat Petition chattery sets red Civil Magistrate has feldom any Interest to corrupt 30 ment which after all Ecclefisheral Juris anighten the Clergy, ill ones have made a Babel of the Goftel, 10. Bely Christ and his Apostles, ib. Once the Almimon of the People, ib. Since the Mafters of Mankind ib. Their ftrange Apoftacy from Chriflianity, ib. First intended for a Militia against Satan, 11. But enflave those that employ dehem, ib. Their impious Positions and Politics, ib. Their bloody Practices and Uncharitableness, 11, 12. Their eternal Squabbles and munual Curfing, 12. They pervert Religion to Support Tyranny, ib. Are Enemies to good Princes, prearb up Sedition and Blood, are the Incendiaries of Rebellion and Affaffination, and by these Means acquire Power and Wealth, 12. The Good fecured by punishing the Bad, 20. In-Aructions to them, 25, 26. For the most part the least qualified of any Society of Men, to interpret the Scripture for others, 27 & leq. Always cramp'd in their Education in Schools and in the Universities, 29. Educated generally upon Charity, ib. Swear to Notions before they understand them, ib. Their Bufiness is net to find out Truth. Their Gain tack d'to Opinions establish d by Popes in ignorant Ages, 20. Their Temporal Grandeur, how dangerous it is to call it in Question, 31, 32. To be manumited from a State of Darkness and Servirude, 15. Ought not to be debarr'd from a free Search ofter Truth. Their manner of Arguing with the Church of Rome, contradets their manner of Arguing with Protestant Diffenters, 35. Their frange manner of treating the ·nommon. Gg Bible

Bible and the Diffenters, 36. How they learn to be Successors of the Apolles, 54, 55. Coft the People more than the whole Civil and Military Lift, 80. And yet! ib. At the Reformation throw themselves at the King's Mercy, and discorge their ill-gotten Wealth, and renounce their ill-us'd Power by a publick Petition, 92. That Petition chang dinto an All of Parliament, 93. Swear to all the Acts of Parliament which affert all Ecclefiastical Jurisdicton to the Crown only, and Subjected to Pramunire if they contradict the same, 96. Bound by the 27th Canon to observe the old Jurisdiction of the Crown over the Ecclesiastics, can do no publick Ast without the King's Authority, profess to receive all Jurifdiction from the Crown, never Suffer'd to controvert the Prerogative, 100. Their Infolence reprehended in the Queen's Reign, 101. The thief End of their Appointment and Hire, 152. The great Revenue paid them, whether well or ill bestow'd, 1,2. It is the Duty of the Laity to make them ufeful, in ibid. Clergymen, the Way to that Calling very easy, 70. The Labour of a Clergyman bought and fold, ib. What Advantages might be expected from their Education, Profession and Studies, 120. Tet are often worfe than all Men, 121, In too many Countries begin the World with a notorious Breach upon natural Honesty and Innocence, 124. Going into Orders pretend to be mov'd by the Holy Ghoft, but often really by other Motives, ib. How strangely they differ about the Sense of the Articles, 125. Inftances of this, ibid. In former Reigns devote the Lairy to Chains, 129. Their Inconfistency, 1130 Collier (Mr.) corrects St. Paul, 143, His Description of the Office of a Chaplain, 144: The strange Power he gives to Chaplains, ib. Puts the Clergy in joint Commission with the Angels, 145. Quarrels with an Att of Parliament for an odd Reason, ib. Will allow a Chaplain no Superior, 246 Common-Stoil Com

be

ks

Ch

De

hos

De

124

Dif

Dif

33

Do

sf

Do

Ber

THE RESIDENCE OF THE PARTY OF T		The state of the s		
Common-Pr	ayer Book er	nacted by P	arliament,	95
Conformity,	when a Sin,	197. H	low wickedly	con-
tended for,		4		199
Confectation	, (Popish) bo	wit began	1170 Its	ridi-
culous Uje,	ibid. Its f	oulish Conse	quences, 18	9 ta
191. 107	bid by the Lar	D. 192. It	Abjuranty,	198.
Its Pagan	et for it from	Kealon of	Scriptures	109.
Conscience.	the only Guid	in Religio	n, 283 to	285
Convocation	, differs with	the Apolt	les, 60. Th	e ri-
diculous U	made of then	by High-C	hurch State	men,
	Instance of th		1 200 11303	jb.
Councils, (G	eneral) a Chi	walter of	them, 40	41.
Cannot mee	t, and would	only scold	or fight if	they
Adid,	all the said and said a	keps in Pe	those of sor	400
	he first, its C. n to be affented		and the last	61
The Import	tion of them	ontrary to	Reason and	Cha-
vity, ib.	tion of them c Dangerous to	Religion,	29. The w	icked
Ends and	fecular Motin	es for mai	king them,	ibid.
	ride and end i		o. Procu-	ed by
	Popes and Em		en derraded	41
Crimes, wha	Crimes are		4431	443
a Irilla Sagrap	the agorada	eadily even	incore hours	Pe
The second secon	the Difference	1	modern Dea	cons.
and Sci	ripture Deacon	stortich (en	if leastited F	372
	its clearness,	1. No	Body of Me	n set
apart to ex	plain it,	and probable	The state	ib.
	oufifts neither	n mechani	cal Joy nor	Sor-
Difference and	at sorts, make s		ifor now horse	301
Diffination h	etween matter	Cimil de	A Ecclefiaft	6 4
Chimerical		econstably,	pus Assado	104
	ow to know c	ertainly w	hether they	come
from God,	a che Referma	by and and the total	To go was a f	142
Dodwel (M	r.) his Chara	Her , 130 0d	or water	210
	Esclefiaftical)	^	of Popery,	103
-moara		Gg 2	1	Juty,

to be d. o. at m, an the fly to ber the id. 30 rels ib. 46

The LNDEX.

Duty, the Importance of it implies	its Cemainty, 21.
Duty, the Importance of it implies Necessary Duties easy and plain,	cache view of 89
-400 highligh choir . Lot . sich ?	Comment of the comment

Control of the street of the s
Confectation, (P
my of one adopted
proper, touy, and
common Advanta-
content, 1b. The
nd them; their
umerated, ib. Be-
7. If not respect-
ules mhy they are
emanding Respect, e Advantages ac-
a Administration
Barrakahanges ac.
g the Bad, 19. A
best part of 1700
lds and it is not
than when they be-
warfe, 253 Their
y the Word of God
mpious Means they
aftics of all Ranks
parity, and by that
, ib. Ecclestaftic
. An Irith Bifbop
bidicons, the sp
n the King only,
Wilder Grant ourse
by Philosophers and
al Luttolobbers taka
ects of a University
se than none, 224,
125 Res, what fores
Dillidaion berroes
aportance, 173
of the State - 01.
formation. 92
thom, 138, 140,
help of Priefles 139
Excom-

Excommunication, what, 154. Primitive, what, 383. \$88 bit, good or bad, as Force, a8. The Seength of FAculties, (our) given by God to be us'd, Faith (implicit) dangerous in Government as well as in Religion, 7. Not to be exercised by Proxy 27. How distinguish'd from Creduting 375 38. How gried, 193. How little it fignifies wirbout Morality ib. and 194 to 196. What is meant by it, 206, 209 Falle Learning, the great Mischief of it, 223 & leq. Fasting, the roguish Use made of it by the Pagan Priests, 259. Not made a Duty by the Law of Nature, 2601 No flated Fast appointed by the New Testament, 261. The Gain the Popilo Priefts make of it, 262. Priefts have no Power to enjoyn it, 264. The Absurdity of Such a Power, 264, 265 ... The Evils occasioned by it, ib. and 266. Fasting and Feasting made ne-Fasting, how little it fignifies to Religion, 201, 202, 202. How little practifed by the Clergy, 204. And yet how gainful to them formerly, 205. Their Policy . bidie of Equaty of The Ablantic guitaingqo nic Fathers, want Orthodoxy, 211. Inflances of this, ib. Free-Thinker, the Character of that Author, 5. Free-Thinker Extraordinary, the Character of that 6 Conficant, 79. This Confideration recomme range To The Convecation, ib. The facentiftency of their Pre-2. Oc. Hence the Cauli semiens and Eractices, COD, his Glory promoted by Mens semporal Hap-

1

2

12th .

d

ey

ar

ic

op

di 19,

96

and

fity

241

25

6

73

91.

92

40, 139

om:

ngill

pinefs, 202 His Word not belien'd without Evidence, 208. How certainly to pleafe him, 281,282 Golpel, (the) the plainest Institution in the World, 62 Gravity, always a Characteriffic of Impofiure, 200. What it is, and what it produces, 204. Its Influence upon the Vulgar, .dir Grorius (Hugo) bis Character of Ecclefiaftical Hifto-221 3 to Tiy. Low much they must good Birth Q.

Excommendation, what Ha. Primitive, what 383.
Abit, good or bad, its Force, 28. The Strength of
Hallifax (Lord) a wife Saying of his to the Watty
Heathen Pricits, their Arts, of another in 131
Heraldry, (Esclefiaftic) whence derivid
Herefy, the Correction of it referved to the Law, 95 Hereticks, are Friends to Virtue, Religion, and Society
when they live well, 200. The cruel Usage they who are called so, meet with,
Hicks (Dr.) the blasphemous Trash vented by him and
. I Leftey miles to ans I say be straightful to the start of 19
Hierarchy (ours) a Creature of the Civil Power, 102
An Independent one of the State, not confiftent with the Goodness of God, nor with Christianity, nor with
Civil Happiness and Liberty 375 to 377 The Ab-
· furdity and Impossibility of it, ib. The ridiculous
wanner in which it is prov'd, 377, 378
High Clergy, their Folly and Dissonesty in Railing at the Freedom of the Age, 76. Pay no Regard to the
Rale of Equity, 77. The Absurdity of their Beba-
viour, ib. Own themselves overcome, by calling out
for Help. Their real Advantages, 78. Their pre-
sended Danger, ib. How they differ from the first
the Convocation, ib. The Inconfisency of their Pre-
tensions and Practices, 305, 306. Hence the Caufe
of their Contempt, 307. They cause Ridicule, and
rail at it, ib. A remarkable Instance of their Jea-
Toufy and Vigilance in behalf of their Trade, 307 to
High Church Men, not Members of the Church of
England, 101. Are perjurd in afferting their own
Independency, ib. The strange Inconsistency of their
Practices wieb their Principles, 113. Inflances of this,
113 to 115. How much they hate good Men, 212

H

High

HHH

JE ten

High Church Notions, the Madness, Difaffection and Mischief they produces 1034 Few Low Church Clergy dare renounce them, ib. Opposite to Christia-Shews how to be All Bornieting 614 Makind, 10. High Church Priests, the Tools and Drudges of Faction, 118. How capable the Laity are to teach them, 119. The Mischief they have done ib. A Prayer for their Amendment, ib. Why more wicked than all other Men, 122, & leq. Subscribe the Articles without believing them, and abuse those that do, 126. Mifead those that follow them, and curse those that leave them, 133 Allow us to read the Bible, but not to make ule of its ib. How they treat Reafour Confound Reason and Scriptures 134, 135. Their wild Behaviour and Contemps for Mankind ib Not troubled at the Extent of Paganifes, 176 But alarm'd at Conscience and Differests, 177. Damis all the World without taking one Step to convert it, ib. A Sample of their Honesty and just Reasoning, 250 to 254. How grofly they pervert Truth and Piety, and abuse their Followers, 255 to 257. They do not suffer them to know the Christian Religion, 238 Holinels, what it is and what it is not, 185, 186 Holy Spirit, weak Men cannot Speak clearer than him, Holy Ghost, frequently bely'd by young Men feeking Orders, 70. When bely'd, Straits there a 124 Holy Days, what Idleness, Wickedness, and Debauchery are committed in them, 300, 301. Their Con-Sequences, 203, 204 Humanity, inseparable from Grace and Goodness, 312

JESUS CHRIST, the certain Rule given by bim for trying of Doctrines, 138. How eafily he is to be distinguish d from Impostors, 139, 140. Ignorance, the difference between natural and acquired,

Law,

0

n

r

5,

3

h

Independent,

THE UND BIX

#1 [18] [18] [18] [18] [18] [18] [18] [18	
Independent, how this Paper 1 96,08. Independen	1
Whig his Reverence for the good Chergy, 9. Rejoice	
that there are many fath, to! And in their ufefulne	3
Mankind, ib. Shews how to be distinguish'd from	3
To tyling the south of the state of the stat	I
the Bud, 16. Lift bimfelf under the Butther of the	e
good Clergy, 16. Berver Christianity by exposing Priest	-
eraft, ib. and to. Why he descends to write abou	E
nochaplains, 143. WHis Religion, busmb 443, 444	ŀ
Independency of a Protestain Church, its Absurdity	,
Nonfence, and Impossibility, To To To	1
Indifferent Things, mone in Religion, and a son 282	3
Indifferent Things, none in Religion, 284	ŀ
Impollute; dreads of fair Enquiry, and voby, 29	
How Supported, 130 Dread Examination 70	5
Infidels, often recent d good Chareb Men, Men, 190 199)
Judgment, (our) higherto be at no Man's Service, 27	,
Jurildidion-Ecclefialtic, own d by the Clergy to pro-	
Jurisdiction-Ecclesiattic, own d by the Clergy to pro- ceed intirely from the Crown, and accepted by them in humble Terms from the Royal Bounty and Indulgence	2
bumble Terms from the Royal Bounty and Indulgence	,
CCCO)
Pretty, and abuse their in towers, 285 to 28 3. They	
Tings, the Head of the Church in the amplest	
Kings, the Head of the Church in the amplest Mainer, ton it is not the set it that seemed with the service will have string with the service will be set to	
Holy bours, weak thin almot feed clearer than him.	
Abourer (Spiritual) every one to chuse his own, Lais, a great Strumpet, but in an Ecclestastical Sense a true Virgin,	
Soly Chods frequently bely a by Joung Men Jesting	
Lais, a great Strumpet, but in an Eccleftaftical Senfe	
of Vary's, what Idenels, Wickensensensen ours	
Latey, not the Authors of the Contempt of the Clergy,	,
79. Nor answerable for the Degeneracy of the World,	
80. How much they exceed the Clergy in Religion, \$16	
Land, (Archbishop) his Zeal for the Religious Trum-	
pery and Ceremonies of Rome, 246. His mad Man- ner of Confecrating St. Cacharine's Church, ib. and	
ner of Confectating St. Cacharine's Church, ib. and	
- And Fire elleral, and incomus imaginations. 10.	
Laws, Human and Devine, why and bow the differ,	
Laws, Human and Divine, why and bow shey differ,	
quired,	

Law, the great Duties of it, want no Expli	cation, 23.
The Impiety of afferting the contrary, ib. great Clearness, 56, 59. Appoints the Ci	jewiin, its
frate to teach the People, 56. Who they are	
to Laws, and rail at them, 111. Promul	action and
Plainness, the Essence of a Law, 372. This	garron and
ticularly true of the Divine Law,	
Layman, a virtuous one, a more secure and pr	
than a profane Priest, 69 Laymen, the	
Authors of Church Reformation, 90 Quali	
Law may exercise Ecclesiastical Jurisdictio	
Have the same Means of knowing Christ, t	
bave, and les Temptations to falfify his Gospe	
Learning, how abus'd by the Priefts,	
Levi, that Tribe, the Twelfth part of the Jewist	
Liberty, preserv'd by the Laity, in opposition	
deraft, have a white to be forme	221
Lion, that Beast never uses Cunning,	76
Low Churchmen, the best and only Friends of t	
114, 115. High Churchmen its bitterest En	CONTROL OF THE CONTRO
M Achiavel, his Advice how to change the	Constitu-
tion of a State,	81
Mahomet, his Arts,	131
Mankind, how misted in religious Matters,	50
Man, his first Thoughts naturally honest,	123
Men, their Decisions in Religion, how little	
garded,	208, 209
Metaphysical Distinctions, of no Use to Re-	CONTRACTOR OF THE PARTY OF THE
of great Service to Priests,	86
Milton, his Sentiments of Chaplains,	147
Misleaders of the World, who,	24
Mob, (the) its Constancy to the Church,	117
Moles, the Lay Sovereign, prays for the Ped	
(feduc'd by their High Priest) they provok'd	THE REPORT OF THE PARTY OF
His Law, a Character of it, Multitude (the) what Fooleries they take for	Religion.
169, 170. A memorable Instance,	ib.
H h	N.

The Th D II A.
France the great Little of Mysant no Laplication, 22
NEcessary, every thing necessary in Scripture is plain,65
Nonlenie, who in Possession of Janctifying it, 110
Numa Pompilius, his Arts, 131
the south the same and the same and the
Ath of Supremacy, what it is, 96. College Oaths
often ridiculous, and impossible to be kept, 124
Ordination, what it requires, 67. It conveys nothing
and neither mends the Heart, nor improves the Un-
derstanding, 68. An A& of the Law, 99
Orders of Clergymen, taken by Men who never exer-
cis'd the Function of Clergymen, 70
Opinions, the monstrous ones of High Church, 104. The
Gain of them, ib. Abstruse ones, how little they fig-
mily, or avished of the stind est of hierolog avisage
Owl, the gravest of all Birds,
The P. in second day of whole
Parties in Religion, all pretend to be in the Right, 136
Parliaments, at the Reformation, are warm with
the Memory of Jacerdotal Oppression, 96. How they
dealt with the Clergy, ibid.
Passover (a Jewish Sacrament) not celebrated by the
Peace of the Church, what it naturally fignifies, 278,
279. How broken, ib. Its Meaning perverted, 280.
When lawful to break it, 281. Who they are that
break it, 282. By what wicked Means 'tis ofeen
preferv'd, 285
Penance, how little it fignifies to Religion, 294, 295.
The terrible Lengths Priests have carried it, 296.
Defined, 297. And exposed, 299. It is inconsi-
flent with the Bounty and Mercy of God, 298, 299
People, abus'd by their Leaders, 84,85
Perjury, how popular it renders High Church Priests,
who abuse all that do not practife it, 127.
Perfecution, why first begun, and by whom, 179. They
that Suffer it generally in the right, 180. The End

of Persecution, ib. and 181. Expresty forbid by our Saviour, and never practifed by his Apostles, ibid. The dreadful Spirit and Effects of it, 182, 183. It is opposite to the Genius of the Protestant Religion, and of Christianity, 183, 184. Is a War against Conscience, Perfecutors, Satan's Executioners. 172 Pope, every Party has one, and is deceiv'd by him, 7. His Policy, Power (worldly) difavow'd by our Saviour, 45,46. And by St. Paul, 46. And by St. Peter, ib. The Claim of it inconfistent with the Propagation of the Gospel, 48, 49. Power Ecclesiastical, how it ought to be proud, 53. Power, of no fort whatfoever, the only Power which the Clergy can claim; having difclaim'd all other Power upon Oath, 101. and the Exercise of Power, that Distinction a Blunder of the High Church, 110. Powers, Apostolic, no Clergyman can exercise them, nor ought to pretend to them, 381, 382. Power mentioned in the Gospel relates intirely to the other World, 384. Power, Sovereign, cannot depend upon Ambiguities and Figures, 401, 402 Prayer, not sooner beard in one Place than another, 188. How it becomes a Duty, 435, 436 Preachers, the Primitive ones, undertook a Burden not a Command, 396. They were poor Men, ib. They bad no Jurisdiction, nor pretended to any, 396 to 399 Prejudices, why seldom refigned, Priests, High ones allarmed at this Paper, 14. Impatient of Contradiction, 32. A modern Description of them by our Blessed Saviour, 62. (Heathen) their Characters, 64. Create Deities after their own Likenefs, ib. How they expose themselves, 72. How it comes to pass that they are for any Religion, 73. The Ground of their Quarrel with Conscience, ibid. All of them equally contend for Power, but differ about Sharing it, 85. The Stress they lay upon Trifles, Hh 2 165

e

t

n

5

9

s,

7-

d

of

The state of the s
165. How apt to be bot in Dispute, 199. Their
Cruelty to the Laity, 200, 201. Their Arts to pro-
mote Ignorance, 217, 218. How they abuse the
Laity, 218, 219. The Figure they make, 226. Their
Temper and Breeding, 227. Their Awkwardness, 228.
Compar'd to the Grotesque Figures in old Build-
ings, 228. Disfigure and destroy Religion, to Sup-
port their own Claims, 302, 303. Their amazing
Cruelty, 315 to 320. The Hardship put upon those
that disoute with them, 261. No Priest instituted
that dispute with them, 361. No Priests instituted by the Gospel Dispensation, 364 to 370
Priestly Insolence, a remarkable Instance of it, 92.
Priestly Fopperies will not now pass for Wisdom, 116.
Priestly Deminion, its Impiety and Tyranny, 373,374
Priestcraft, its poysonous Nature, 160. It corrupts
every Thing, ib. Instances of this, 161 to 167.
Heathen and Popish, how much alike, 413 to 415
Priethood region pollets the Dorner of Derferention.
Pricthood, never possess the Power of Persecution,
without using it, 184, 185 Private Judgment, the Necessity of it in Religion, 213,
214
The state of the s
Professions, how try'd,
Propositions, how to be examin'd,
Prolocutors, not Necessary to the Almighty, 59
Prophefy, why ceas'd,
Public Virtue, its Decay, 215. And the Cause of it,
268 at 308 cm of a barrier on 100 100 216, 217
Punishment, for Opinions of what ever kind, barba-
rous and umeafonable, 179, 180
foundational some of the state

Quakers, some Account of them, 154. They are religious, but have no hired Clergy, allowed by Mr. Nortis to be a most considerable Sect, 155. Their Knowledge in Divinity, ib. Their Opinion about Tythes well grounded, as also their Opinion atout the Clergy, 156. They follow the Primitive Christians

Christians therein, ib. As likewise their Opinion against bearing Arms, 157. As also in their Principle of not swearing at all, ib. Are all capable of Reading, ib. Are fond of the Bible, 158. Contend for Private Judgment. Their excellent Regulations as a Society, 159. Gain by a Comparison with High Churchmen, and are not the worse for want of Clergy, ibid. Quartilla, a Strumpet in Petronius, forgets that ever she was a Virgin,

legated by consensity and was tright late if

R Eason, when, and why Men are against it, 81. The Use and Extent of it, 268, 269. It is a Ray of the Divinity, and essential to Religion, 270 to 272. It distinguishes the true Religion from false, 273,274. Who are its Foes, ib. and 275 Resormation, in Religion, who they are that always opposed it 24. The Resormation in England the

5

1,

5

10

4

957

9

it,

17

80

are by

55.

1013

a-

ive

oppos'd it, 24. The Reformation in England, the Work of the Laity, but oppos'd by the Clergy, 84. What gave Occasion to it, ib. The Arts of the Ecclesiastics to defeat it, 85. The Reformation, the Spirit it produces, 219. Not carried far enough, 219, 220

Religious Liberty, the glorious Growth of it in this Reign, 342, 343

Religion, what the only Design of it, 8. The Iwo great Points of it, 21. The Religion established, by what Arts to be alter'd, 83. When left to the Priests, always abus'd and sacrific'd to their Interest, 97. The Attempts of the High Clergy to change ours, but hinder'd by the Laity, 83. Religion, how propagated, 178. The Ends of it not serv'd by human Misery, 203. Why Instituted, 313. Natural to Man, and almost all Nations have some Religion, 321. The Folly and Outrages committed for false Religions, 322. The Use of Religion to Government, 323. The Advantages ill Priests make of Religion, and their Readiness

to change from one Religion to another for Gain, A remarkable Instance of this, ib. Religion at the foreign from worldly Power, 380. In what man taught by our Samiour, 380, 381, 383. Christ Religion made a Metaphysical Science, 51. The	iner ian Ad-
Simplicity and Lovelinels, 229. Disfigured by man Inventions, 228, 2	bu-
Reproof of small Faults, of small Service, Revelation, the absurdity of one that wants to be vealed,	3
Ridicule, how much, and why the Priests hate it, 30 Cannot buxt Religion and Vittue,	
Rome (the Church of) why own'd by the High Gle to be a true Church, 44. Her different Treatment the English Clergy, now and formerly, 130. Clergy of that Church, the Two principal Arts which they support themselves, 132. Imitated by thers therein,	by the by

CAcraments, the Administration of them, not confin'd by our Saviour to any Set of Men whatfoewer. Sacrilege, the Cry of it not regarded at the Reforma-90, 91 Sanctify'd Names, bow little they signify, 210 Sarum (late Bilbop of) his Character of the Clergymen and Laymen, Satan, what would do him too much Credit, namely, making him a Match for a Million of consecrated Perfons, School Divinity, its Uselesness and Absurdity, Schoolmen, their Character, Scripture, address'd to all Men alike, 23. Some Parts of it, why obscure, 23, 24. Not given to make Work for Interpreters, 58. How abus'd by Priests, 166, 167. Its Elogium, Simony,

St

fp Tel

379 nony,

7Irtues,

9	
8 7 12	Simony, the Clergy sworn not to practise it, 121. In what Instances that Oath is often broken, 126, 127 Slavery, grows desirable through Habit, Society, every voluntary one has a Right to create then
l- ts t-	own Pastors, and to judge them, 74. (Religious ones) an Account of their Beginning and Establishment, 390
3	Souls, not to be fav'd by Proxy,
6-	Sounds, how Men are deluded by them, 171. Instances of this,
23	Speculations, the Combustions rais' by the Priests about
3.	Subjects, what worth a wife Man's Thoughts,
R.A.	Succession, (uninterrupted) enquir'd into,42. Not once
by	mention'd in Scripture, ib. The Clergy at endless odd
by by	about it, 43. Instances of this, ib. 'Tis a Contra-
0	diction to the Reformation, ib. Cranmer disown
id.	it, ib. Deriv'd from Antichrift, 44. The only
	one which has not been interrupted, 62. Modern
	Apostolical Succession, its Vanity, Superstition, a Philosophical Account of it, 420 to
con-	423. The Uses and Advantages the Heathen and
reso-	Popish Priests make of it, 424. Their Arts to en crease it.
54 ma=	crease it, 425 to 425
91	\$ 2.2 1 Some from the with the way to some the state of the form
210	Rade, the Parson's, what would spoil it, 81
men	Truth, receives Advantage from Examination
121	29. Not to be discover'd by those who have an interest against it, 30. Can never sin, 75. Need
mely,	no Malanorados as Horn many Friencies it has
rated	especially Spiritual Ones, 221. How it would pro-
81	11 11 11 11 11 11 11 11 11 11 11 11 11
24-	Teltimony, Rules to try the Truth of it, 31
Parts	Willotton (Archhillant) a fine Observation of his
Work	and I demonstrate and transfer of the doctor, will
166	Tirtues. what Virtues are vernarded Eternally

what Virtues are rewarded

Eternally,

442. 443 Univer-

Univerlities, the miserable State of Learning and I
ligion there, 32, 220. Too often initiate Youth
to Perjury, salah demonda blanchish perten ar I
Vulgar, (the) what fort of Religion pleases them be
304, 305. High Church Vulgar, how they a
missed, and their Reverence misplac'd, 249 to 2
LEUT.
WHimfies, of private Doctors, what Contempt th
deferve,
Whiston (Mr.) his Charge upon the Clergy for not b
lieving their own Articles, almos alt amounts 1:
Will of God, a Rule to know it, World, the way to debauch it, is to debauch the You
Words, how they deceive the World 6. The abuse
Writers, the finest often neglect Important Subjects,
Writings, (Controverfial) the difference between those
Gentlemen and those of Divines,
and
WOuth, how easily Susceptible of Vice and Virtu
The Use and Advantages the the word It
Panish Princes make of a pina. Their rices to ene
ZEal, (true) a Definition of it, and Character of i
169. Falfe Zeal how much Mischief it does; 168
169. It is brutish, implacable, and profane, 17
its terrible Character, and vile Pedigree, 170, 17
The Zeal of corrupt Priests, its Causes and Motive
172, 173. How little they concern the Laity, it
Often the Effect of Constitution, 173, 175. A remarkable Instance of this, ib. How apt Men ar
to be mistaken about it, ib. Christian Zeal, it
Meekness and excellent Effects, 174. Inseparabl
from Charity, ib. Is an Enemy to all Severity, ib
Modern Zeal, its utter inconsistency with the Gospel
176. Altogether unlike that of the Apostles, ibid
Zeal of High Church Priefts, bow wretchedly em
ploy'd, 176. Not intended to promote Religion, ib
FINIS

lein24
in24
if, are
25
in26
in26
in27
in28
i